

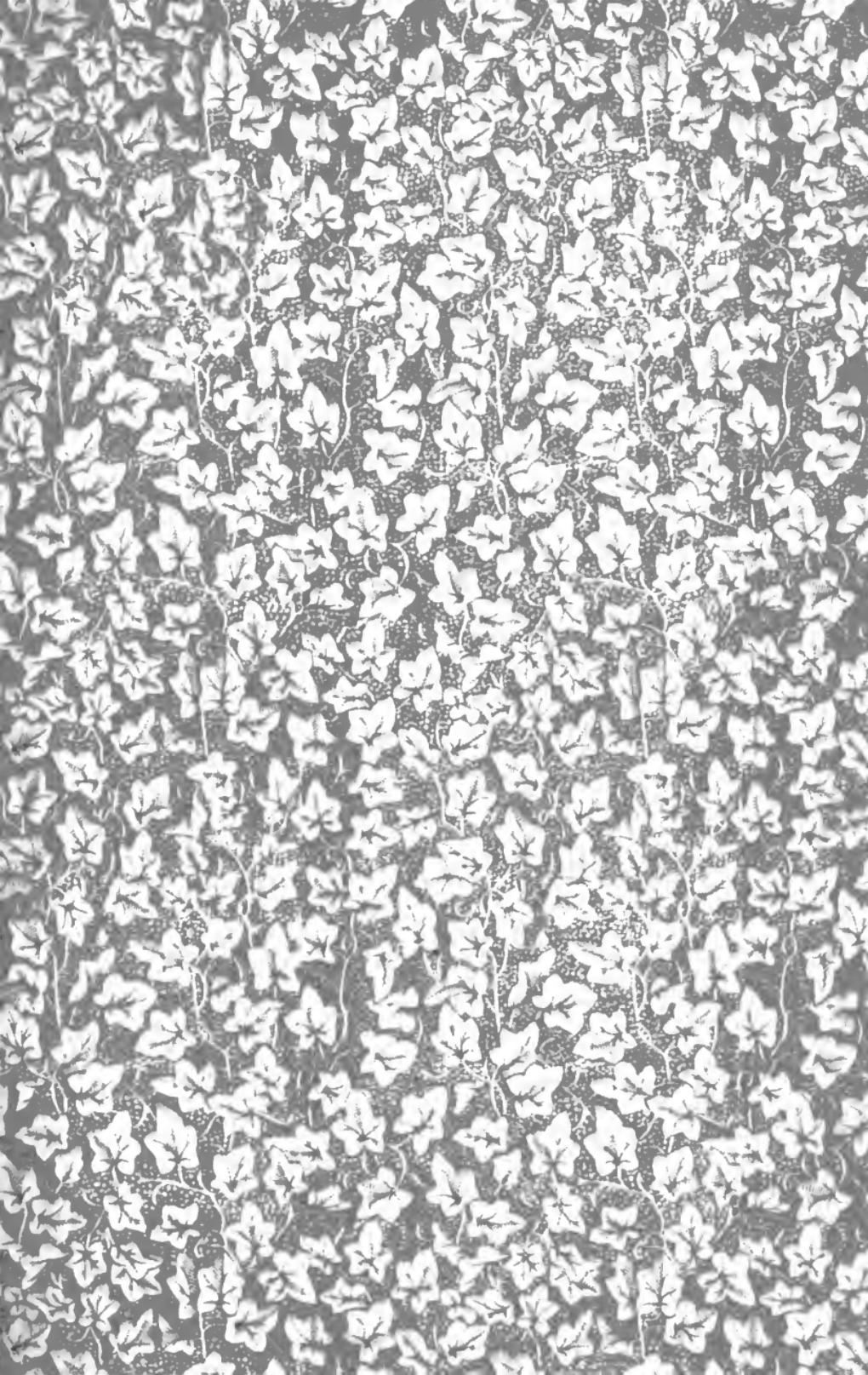
# ZERALDA

G. A. WHITTLE

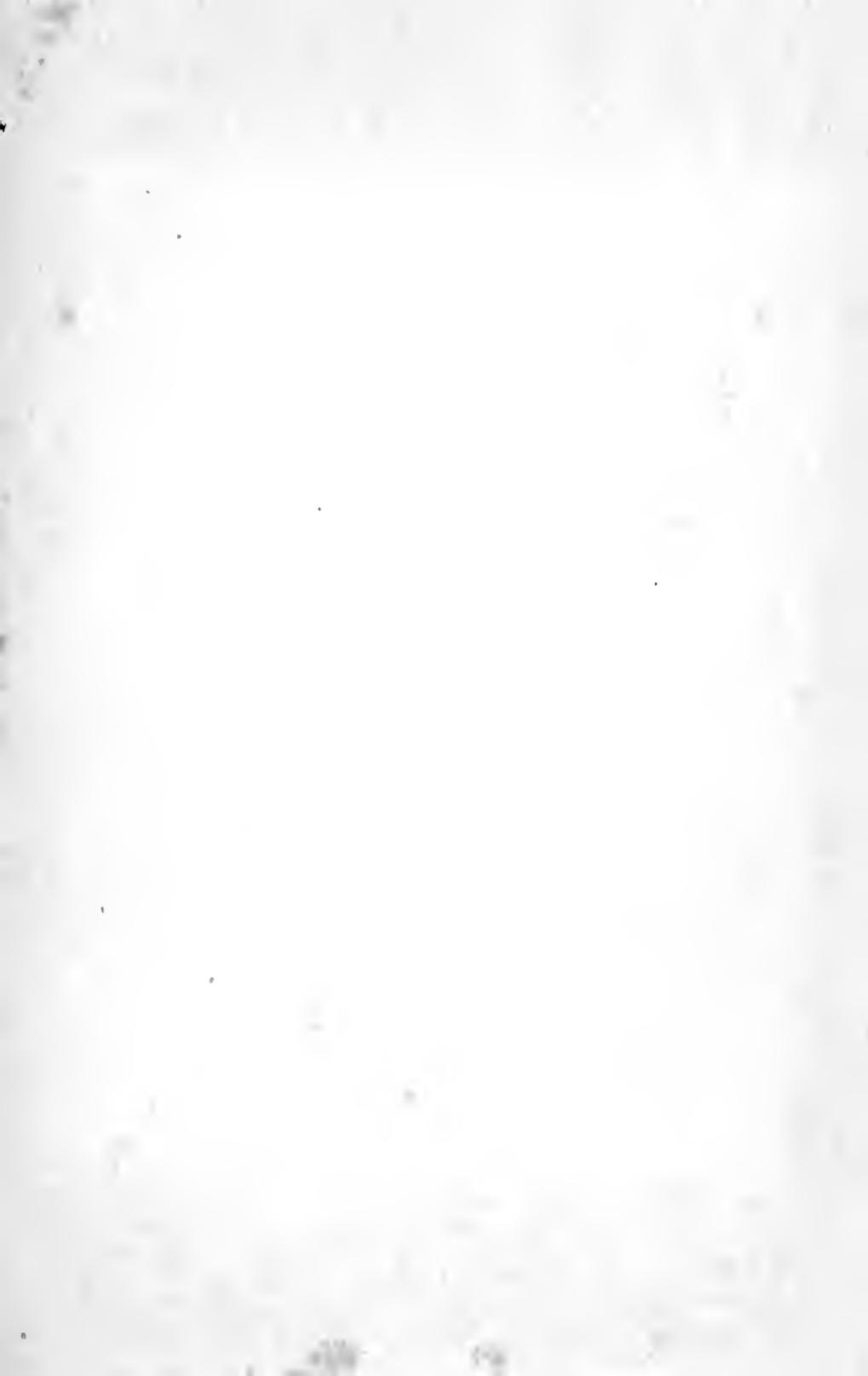


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# ZERALDA

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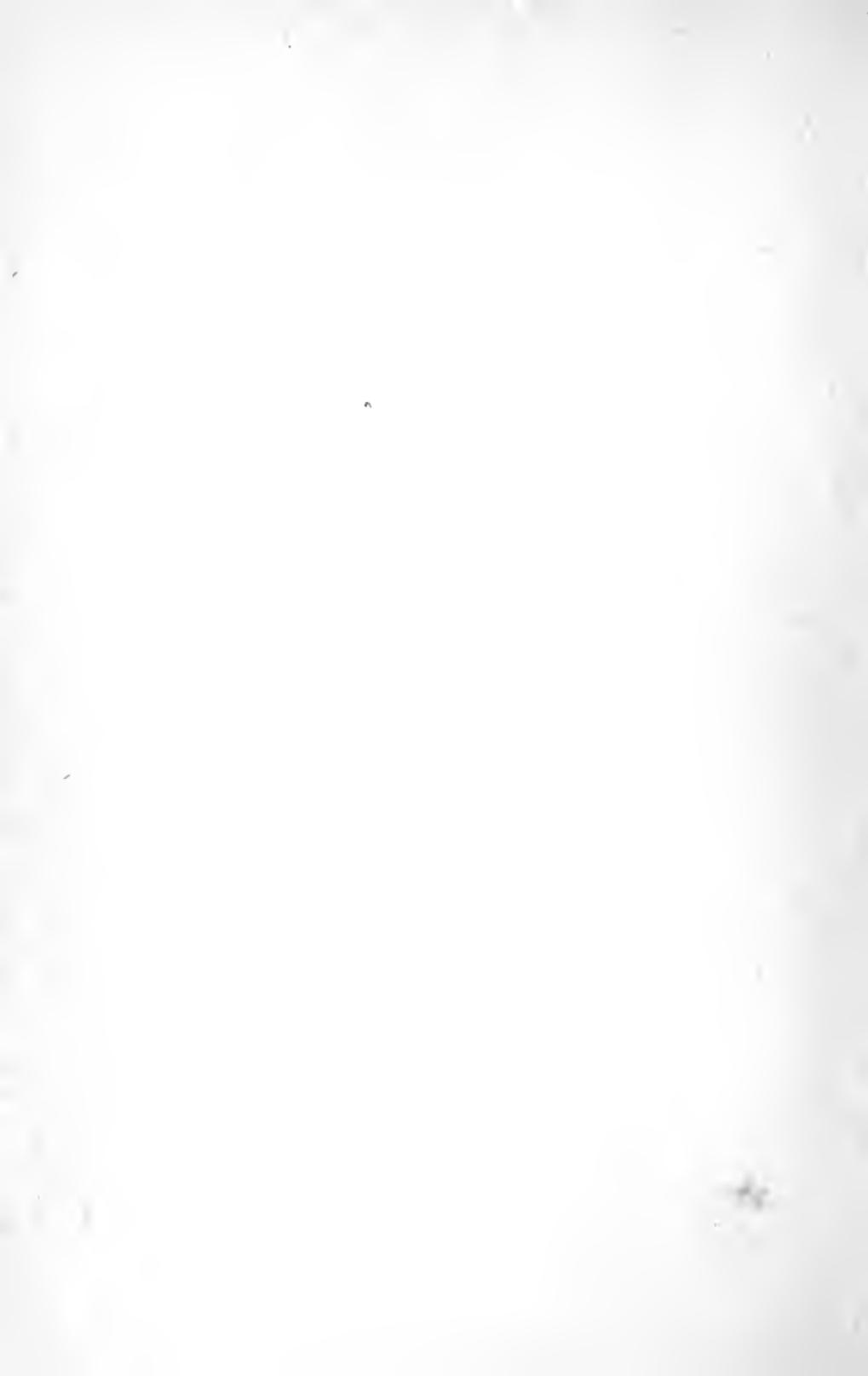
# ZERALDA

AN EPIC POEM

BY

G. ALBERT WHITTLE

*PRIVATELY PRINTED*



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Come to mine aid, soft spirit of the muse  
And thrill me with a melody of thine,  
Direct my thought, while vestal fires infuse  
A genial warmth ; so may I thus entwine  
Within the circlet of my tuneful theme  
A garland fair, and from the limpid stream  
Let dew pearls sparkle o'er my new cull'd flow'rs :  
In tiny rainbow orbs of twinkling show'rs.

942003



# ZERALDA

## CANTO I.

Now bathe the towering hills their lofty  
height,

In tender roseate hues of morning light,  
As through the shaded green her steps  
incline ;

And nigh the arbour, where the fruitful  
vine

In rich effulgence grows.

Across the tufted meadow, moist with  
dew,

A chaséd creature doth the hare pursue ;

With sportive glee in freedom they  
delight ;  
They leap adown the mossy bank, where  
bright  
A shining river flows.

\* \* \* \* \*

Stay ! what is that which now diverts  
his gaze,  
Beyond the flowing stream, all in amaze ;  
As through a veil he views a maiden's  
form,  
That, like the Dawn, enrobed in white, as  
borne  
On Zephyrs' breeze appears.

With lightsome tread he hastens down  
the vale,

And scans the waters where the rocks  
prevail :

His need perchance their numbers may  
provide

A link, a chain, a bridge, to span the  
tide :

Why stay for idle fears ?

'Tis even thus ; above the glancing wave,  
Where crags and stones surmount a  
watery grave ;

His feet scarce press the boulders firm  
and round ;

Than, on the nether bank, the yielding  
ground

Receiveth him secure.

Nor waiteth he to contemplate the shore,  
Or rest more long than breathing doth  
restore :

But upward, where the lady meekly  
dwells,

Observing him, whose near approach  
foretells

No story premature.

With courteous mien, and bold respectful  
grace ;—

With form erect he looketh on her face :  
And radiant on a countenance so fair,  
A smile of admiration reigneth there,  
That noble deeds inspire.

And while the waving branches o'er them  
bend,—

Their leaves of silver rustling, softly  
lend,  
Among the trees seclusion, whispers  
faint,  
That mingle with a songster's mellow  
plaint,  
Accordant to conspire.

“Respectful homage to the sylvan maid;”  
Thus he began:—“I offer thee mine aid,  
To render such assistance that may give  
Incessant action to the powers that live  
Within my mortal frame.”

She, for reply,—with attitude demure;—  
“Accept my thanks, which I to thee  
assure:

For in thy zeal to reach this lonely nook,  
Mine eyes beheld thee cross the stormy  
brook ;  
I crave to know thy name."

"With love," said he, "this morn I  
sought the glade ;  
Nor in my onward journey paused or  
stay'd,  
Until I thee beheld, forlorn and free :  
A prize more rare than mine expectancy  
Had e'en resolved to gain ; therefore I  
feel  
The gentler influence that thy virtues  
seal,  
Enduing me with willingness to show  
Affections for thy weal, that grateful flow.

This I affirm,—Zeralda is my name,  
Of honour'd lineage, and of equal fame.”  
The lady moved apace; “Brave man,”  
said she,  
“I know thy worth, thy words of  
chivalry  
Awaken my regard,—directeth me  
To prize and cherish thy true constancy.  
When from my couch, within a curtained  
bow'r,  
I rose refresh'd and look'd athwart the  
tow'r:  
There on the hill,—o'ergrown with ivy  
high,  
A golden light, across the eastern sky,  
Proclaim'd the advent of this summer  
day,  
That fill'd me with desire to come away.

And forth I sped across the level lawn ;  
Nor heeded in my flight the startled  
fawn  
That crop'd the moistened tender  
herbage green ;  
And through the steep ravine, that winds  
between  
The rising hills, whose woods surmount  
the dell,  
I here attain'd this source of peace,—  
the well,—  
This vantage ground. And now, with  
gladsome heart,  
Perceive thy mild discretion to impart  
A portion of thy bounty, that may guide  
My willing footsteps further by thy side.  
And now I would resolve that we should  
hie

From this sequester'd tryst of liberty."

" Thy sweet discourse, fair maid, reveals  
thy name,"

Zerala said : " And 'tis for thee to claim  
Me for thine own true knight, and e'en  
rely

On him, whose will it is, to thus comply  
With thine. Midway to yonder distant  
hill,

Whose visible proportions amply fill  
The far expansive retrospective view ;  
Surrounded with the beach, the elm, and  
yew,

There is a lake, whose fair locality,  
Already may indeed be known to thee :  
The same, if circumambulated round,  
A good day's march would serve to mark  
the ground.

Upon the mirror'd surface, firm and dry,  
A miniature isle thou may'st descry ;  
If from the rising uplands we survey—  
A castellated structure, worn and grey,  
Supported on that firm and solid bed,  
Within a grove of trees, whose branches  
    spread

Their leafy burthen o'er the rustic sedge,  
That declines down unto the water's edge.  
I purpose, that forthwith united, we  
Should forward speed to that good  
    destiny,

Wherein my faithful people shall sustain  
Their master's wish, and give thee rest  
    again."

The lady bow'd consent unto his plan,  
And said, " Proceed, thou bold and  
    goodly man."

While thus the two their kindly greetings  
changed,

Among the woods, gay wingéd tenants  
ranged ;—

Their song increasing as the day's broad  
light

Developed in their midst.—Rare roses  
white,

And roses red, bestrew'd the path  
around ;

While through the vale, where lilies fair  
abound,

Upon the gentle breeze soft fragrance  
flowed,

That could the words inspire of some  
sweet ode.

When on the teeming deck the pilot  
stands,

And utters forth his earnest firm commands :

Attentive to his better knowledge, they,—  
The men conjoin his orders to obey ;  
With equal confidence the maiden moved,  
To follow where Zeralda's skill approved ;  
Avoiding where a rough and thorny way,  
To chide their onward course opposéd  
lay :

So through the furze, above a winding  
glen,

And by the stream, aside the moss and  
fen ;

Then climbing upward, where the mount  
aspires,

With such exertion that the task requires ;  
With undisguiséd joy, they each at last  
Rejoice to feel great difficulties past.

Now on the elevated ridge they stand,  
And look below to view the sloping land,  
Whose extreme portion forms a level  
beach,

Whereon that pebbled shore the waters  
reach.

Nor anxious more to stay so nigh the end;  
'Tis e'en with one accord the twain  
descend,

Till on the shingle strand,—the haven  
gain'd,

The knight and his companion well  
obtain'd

Composure to their weariness and heat :  
While shining waves are glancing near  
their feet.

Blow, softly blow, ye gentle winds, and  
stir

The drooping willows, and the bushy fir,  
Whose long and sweeping branches  
almost shield  
A quaint and wooden structure, half  
conceal'd  
Beneath a canopy of sombre shade,  
Wherein a boat, well trim'd, and  
lightly made,  
Already for the passage buoyant laid.  
And now Zeralda lent his willing aid,  
To guide his fair confident to a stage,  
From whence, with careful steps, they  
both engage,—  
Each in a place to counterpoise secure,  
The small craft's beams that 'neath their  
weight endure.  
Above the wavy element they glide,  
In easy progress, on the moving tide.

To ply the oar, the maiden's guide doth  
cease,—

Preferring other method to increase  
Their forward journey; that, with  
practised skill

Relying on the generous breeze to fill  
The tried white sail, his hands unfurl so  
well,

Obtaining thus more power to propel  
Them gaily on their onward course  
direct;

Rewarded with success in this project,  
Zeralda spake in simple words a few,  
Regard proclaiming that revived anew.  
“If now, fair maid, I may thy name  
pronounce:

Rozeina! 'tis with pleasure I announce  
A happy termination of our quest,

That, with thy presence, I consider  
blest.

What higher honour, for such knight  
as I,

Than to be partner of thy company :

The grace and beauty of thy fair attire,

Can one before thee sit, and not admire ?

Thine hands, that now employ'd the  
helm to steer,

Betoken safety on this inland mere :

From high above the sun's warm rays  
come down,

And in their light thy golden tresses  
crown.

I look on thee ; and with mine eyes  
perceive

The grace and beauty that unite to give

Of their rich store a loveliness their  
own ;—

A lily, blooming in the vale alone,  
Suggests the fitting emblem of my  
dow'r,—

The token of my care,—a simple flow'r,  
That in itself is perfect as 'twas made :  
This,—yea, and more should in thine  
hand be laid."

Thus for a space, with declaration true,  
The maiden's guide continued to review  
Rozeina's charms, whose innocent  
reserve,

Imbued with mild forbearance, to observe  
Those fond expressions of unstinted  
praise,

Made still more gracious her more con-  
scious gaze ;

As, looking o'er the lake, she now espied  
A group of sturdy rocks that seemed to  
    hide

The nearest portion of the shore  
    behind,

They both with one accord their wills  
    combined,—

Gave each a measure of their wisdom's  
    store :

Zeralda took in sail and plied the oar ;  
The maiden press'd the helm, and with  
    a voice

Of tuneful mellow tone, seemed to  
    rejoice

In words of admonition sweet and rare,  
That clothed her mild injunctions with  
    their care.

As on, without mishap, they circled  
round

The firm embedded crags, and solid  
ground ; .

All these they safely pass'd, and steered  
their course

Direct within the harbour's smooth  
resource.

There but remain'd the vessel small to  
moor ;

And thus at last they touched the  
welcome shore.

With deference the knight address'd  
the maid :—

“ At thy disposal are rich blessings laid,  
Of what this island yields, and e'en  
contains ;

And such attendance that mine house  
retains.

Two maids of provéd worth shall wait  
on thee :

An ancient bard, with poet's minstrelsy,  
Shall charm thine ear with harmony and  
love :

Soft music sweet shall then his song  
improve."

" Now, floating on yon turret, I descry  
A sign that we may surely know  
thereby,—

Our coming is observed by those within :  
So wilt thou follow me,—and thus begin  
The short ascent ? These rural steps  
are steep :

But sooner shall we gain the castle's keep,

By choosing thus the hard but nearer  
way ;—

Which rule, I think, is best, as others  
may."

Thus spake Zeralda ; and the lady fair,  
To climb the stair, gave they a goodly  
share

Of diligence, accompanied with strength;  
And on a terrace they arrived at length ;  
Then higher, through a path, that  
winding far

Above, advanced unstay'd by fence  
or bar.

Till on a green plateau they stood before  
Stone walls, where,—in the midst, a  
ponderous door,

Upon its heavy hinges, opened wide.  
As by some hidden mechanism plied,

Right vigorously Zeralda pull'd the chain,  
That presently they should admittance  
gain :

Then took he from his belt, and blew  
with will,

A silver horn, whose echoes loud and  
shrill,

Reverberated through the spacious  
halls,—

Repeating back their low incessant calls.  
But not for long need they to watch and  
wait :

A grating sound, as of an iron gate,  
In movement slow,—a strength that  
strength defies,

Within the arch, the stern portcullis rise.  
Forthwith there came a guard with  
martial mien,

And took his wonted station there  
between

Two massive columns of that portal wide;  
And as the lady, with her faithful guide,  
Advanc'd within, the sentinel pro-  
nounced,

With slow salute, a watchword, that  
announced

The peaceful tidings to his master brave;  
And, passing through the court, Zeralda  
gave

His unappeaséd aid to lead the maid  
Where humble full attention should be  
paid,

To serve her present need. "Be not  
afraid

To ask for ought of mine," he gently  
said :

" For know, thy word and wish are  
paramount :  
The mistress thou, of all that may  
account,  
And that doth here acknowledge me  
their head.  
As through these marble pavéd halls we  
tread,  
Let thy observant faculty awake,  
That mem'ries in thy mind may not  
forsake  
Thy mild perception, when some future  
day,  
If here alone, rememberance shall repay  
Thy brief acquaintance with these walls,  
—encas'd  
In oaken panels, carved and richly  
chas'd ;

Alternately inlaid with quaint designs.  
And now, before thy knight his charge  
resigns,  
'Tis well and wise he should at once  
assume  
The part of counsellor ; nor to presume  
On further speech than doth our time  
engage,  
Come, follow him, whose words of love  
assuage  
All doubts and fears." When thus he  
having said,  
The maiden through a porch Zeralda led.  
Then, in a spacious chamber where the  
light  
Shone thro' the amber tinted panes,  
that bright  
With many colours rich, of varied hue,—

Of gold, and ruby, purple, green and blue,  
Softly suffused around their beauteous  
rays.

“Whilst here thou art, for few or many  
days,”

The chieftain said, “My greater wish is  
this;

That thou shouldst feel a virtue of the  
bliss,

Of healthful recreation and repose,—  
Untrammel’d with turmoil, and free  
from woes.

Adjacent to this room, on this same  
floor,

Of equal amplitude are many more :  
These for thine occupation are adorn’d ;  
And for thy pleasure usefully inform’d ;  
Here now I would desire thee to inspect,

The rare dimensions of that cabinet,  
Therein a neat arrangement is contriv'd:  
The same to know, all others are  
depriv'd.

No other means are needed to remove  
The sidelong panel, in its simple groove,  
Than on this silver bar to gently press,  
And thus come nigh a secret none can  
guess.

The simultaneous effort of each hand ;—  
To one, this outer rib doth yield ; the  
band

Within, that girts the side, at once  
declines  
Beneath the other's touch ; when these  
designs,  
Accomplish'd as they are completed be.  
Three steps from this to that black ebony,

Where joins the casement with the inner  
wall,  
And o'er the wainscot heavy draperies  
fall ;  
Then forcing this small crest within the  
square,  
And sidelong pull the polish'd board :  
    Now ! there !  
Behold ! an open hollow space we see,—  
A dark and undefinéd vacancy.  
If thou, fair maid, were so disposed to  
solve  
The problem that these mysteries involve,  
Along a passage thou with ease would  
wend,  
From that same vault, and gradually  
descend,  
Until a slender beam of light above,

Would serve to guide thee on :—a bird,—  
a dove,

Through one small aperture, would soon  
be free.

A heavy door, whose bolts supply the key,  
With thy concerted strength would open  
wide ;

And then a gate, whose inner bars abide  
The rude invader's concentrated power :  
That harsh defence will stand, though  
fires devour.

A chain behind the inner barricade,—  
United to an arm of metal made ;  
If this thine hand should strain, strong  
bolts of steel

Would loose their hold. These words  
in brief reveal  
The only method certain to obtain

A secret egress from this high domain.  
As straightway thou with ease should be  
set free ;  
And thus regain thy courted liberty.”  
Zeralda then replaced the boards with  
care,  
And led Rozeina to a marble stair ;  
Then gaily sounding on a golden gong,  
Two blithesome maids appear’d with  
dance and song.  
Attired in flowing robes ; while flow’rets  
gay  
Adorn’d the head of each in bright  
display.  
“ Ah ! Celandine and Florazel, ’tis well  
That each so readily within doth dwell :  
’Tis here, this morn, a lady I have  
brought ;

And e'en a journey made, with danger  
fraught.

The sole partaker she with me hath been,  
Across the hills, and through the vale  
unseen ;

And now, a wish for rest her thoughts  
incline ;

That care, and some refreshment may  
combine

To render youthful life again renew'd,  
While Hope's repose imparts beatitude.

So until early noon of this June day,  
Let none desist from duty, but obey.

Adieu, Rozeina, till the mid-day hour :  
I will depart, that thou may'st seek thy  
bower ;

Nor let an anxious thought encompass  
thee :

But take thy rest with mild complacency.  
And now, ye comely dames, with gentle  
grace

Attend this lady, whom of noble race  
Doth honour lend to all who duteous give,  
In her behalf, the good she may receive  
Of their meek service. By such laws  
arranged,

Gratitude and faith are interchanged."

Thus having said, the knight no longer  
staid;

But kindly bow'd as he his farewell bade.  
And from the room, forthwith his men  
to greet,

Departed hence, all thoughtful and  
discreet.

## CANTO I.

*Part II.*

The castle bell had toll'd the signal  
note ;

And all within the walls, howe'er remote,  
Were full apprised the breakfast halls to  
seek :

No other warning needed one to speak ;  
When presently before the table laid  
With fare substantial, orderly arrayed,  
The men and maids assembled to partake  
Of that good cheer which should their  
repast make.

Their peaceful morning meal was then  
begun,

And gratefully enjoy'd till well nigh  
done ;

When there in view, with haste there  
came a man,  
In clothes gold braided clad. Said he :  
    “ I am  
Directed hither to at once make known  
The doleful news,—sweet mistress Rose  
hath flown,  
And left no indication of her flight ;  
Save in the room where she had pass'd  
the night.  
Her toilet she had made, is plainly seen,—  
As saith her maids ; the queenly robes of  
green,  
She wore but yesterday, are laid aside.  
To don that goodly raiment was her  
pride.  
The warder at the gate, who watch doth  
keep

With careful vigilance,—unknown to  
sleep,

In truthful words of confidence doth say,  
That neither man nor maid hath pass'd  
that way

Throughout the night, until this present  
hour.

What time there comes relief, he quits  
the tow'r;

And none hath yet succeeded in the  
quest,

To do according with the earl's behest.

But hark ! I must begone ; for now I hear  
The silver bugle sounding loud and  
clear."

## CANTO I.

*Part III.*

Engross'd in thought,—with slow and  
measur'd tread,  
Gwenvolan paced the hall. “And hath  
she fled,”  
Said he, in tones subdu'd and low :  
“ ’Tis more  
Than need of love that maketh her  
ignore,  
The promise I have made to that brave  
knight,  
Who this same day expects to claim  
the right  
Myself hath granted to his own appeal ;—  
The liberty, that bids him not conceal  
The valour of his purpose and intent,

To claim his bride : so were my wishes  
bent.

Avoiding this, my daughter seeks the  
shade,—

Some courtly mansion in a distant glade  
Perchance may be her destiny awhile ;  
And friends with love her chaste'n'd  
heart beguile.

What clarion note is that, which doth  
salute

This ancient fortress of a high repute ?  
If 'tis a herald with a peaceful plaint,  
He shall my favour find, as 'twere a  
saint :

I will betake me to the outer hall,  
And hold discourse with this bold  
seneschal."



The warder, in abeyance to his lord,  
Pronounc'd his master's message to the  
word :

Whereat the pluméd knight made answer  
bold ;—

“ I have a declaration to unfold ;  
And crave thy master will directly give  
An audience to my speech, and thus  
receive

The intimation only he may hear :  
‘Twill calm his anxious thought,—his  
sadness cheer.”

\* \* \* \* \*

In mournful mood the baron sat alone :  
The bells had chim'd the hour in solemn  
tone ;

While through the hall, the martial  
sound of steel,  
And spurs of silver, clinking at the heel,

Awaken'd him anew. And soon to see  
This visitor of good, whom he might be,  
He wait'd not to hear the soldier's voice ;  
Nor stay'd a moment in regard to choice  
Of words, in which to question or  
demand ;

Nor e'en with sterner tones of dread  
command :

But, raising his mild eyes, he thus  
began :—

“ I welcome thee, if thou a peaceful man,  
Art burthen'd with the news would soothe  
my woe ;

And should be loth to fancy thee a foe.  
Thine open countenance of guile is free ;  
And writ thereon, no thought of wrong  
I see.

Tis part of my perception now, to trace

Thy master's will reflect'd on thy face.  
But e'en before I further contemplate,  
Will stay to hearken what thou may'st  
relate."

The knight without demur his reverence  
paid,

And with an easy accent gently said,—  
“O'er mount and dale, I have, with  
urgent speed,

Pursu'd my journey; nor to rest gave  
heed.

Zerala of the hills,—my master brave  
Doth greet thee from afar; and this he  
gave

Into my charge, which now I hand to  
thee,

A scroll which bears his seal and  
heraldry.

He bade me tell thee that the morning  
light

This day afford'd pleasure and delight,—  
Enabling him to find a maiden fair,  
In lonely solitude, and unaware  
Of his approach, she calmly stood to view  
The undulating land,—all bathed in dew;  
When he his homage paid ; and sought  
her will

Implicitly on him to trust ; until,  
With perfect faith,—regardful and  
content,  
She listen'd to his word, and gave  
consent.

Of this no more my master spake again ;  
But thus, in few,—unwilling to detain,  
Did urge me on :—“ Say thou,” said he,  
“ My care

Constraineth me to fervently declare,  
Whilst in my house this lady doth  
sojourn,  
She shall be safe from harm, nor need to  
mourn :

And glad with peace shall be her night  
and day ;  
As though within her father's house she  
lay."

"Enough ! bold knight, thy message is  
complete,"

The baron said ; "but thou canst not  
defeat  
My firm resolve to conquer these designs :  
No word of thine to change my will  
inclines.

In haste, begone,—away,—depart,—get  
hence :

'Tis idleness to dwell with cool pretence  
On thoughts of friendship, when a  
stranger speaks.

Unto thy master say, her father seeks  
No other favour at his hand this day,  
Than duteous care, unhinder'd by delay ;  
And courtesy unblemishéd and true.  
Fulfilling this,—he shall my doubts  
subdue.

Bid him regard my will, and rectify  
The wrong, his foward actions testify.  
Proclaim the law which I to thee depute,  
That he may not Gwenvolan's will  
refute ;  
So when he hath my urgent will obey'd,  
And to her home my daughter safe  
convey'd,  
He shall a fair and sure reward receive ;

And worthy he to whom I this will give.  
Stay thou not here on argument to  
dwell :  
But forth betake thyself, through moss  
and fell ;  
And speed thee on apace : what e'er  
betide,  
Ensure the safety of Rozeina's ride ;  
Back to her father's home before to-  
morrow's eve,  
Thine, and thy master's honour thus  
retrieve ! ”  
These were the words the baron briefly  
said ;  
And, with a searching glance, the knight  
survey'd ;  
Who, with a meek acknowledgment  
withdrew,—  
Unmindful of a longer interview.

## CANTO II.

Not then the banquet hall was desolate ;  
As, close assembl'd,—waiting to relate,—  
The bard in tuneful song,—in martial  
guise ;

While there, each knight, a hero could  
devise,

Within their woven histories of war,  
Whose fame had echo'd often from afar ;  
The festive board so recently array'd  
With choice and plenteous store thereon  
display'd,

Was then replac'd with rich and luscious  
fare ;

And fruits delicious, delicate and rare.  
Reclining on an ivory carv'd seat,

Where silken textures flow'd in folds  
replete ;—

Enrob'd in vestments,—tinted rose and  
gold,—

A lady fair, whose beauty to behold  
'Twere inspiration to a noble deed ;  
And happiness to him her eyes gave  
heed.

A courtly maiden on each side there  
stood,

With each a countenance refin'd and  
good :

While at her feet a page in velvet green  
In boyish wonder view'd the changing  
scene.

Behind the lady's couch, one step above,  
A Gothic archway form'd a high alcove.  
A courtly chair therein was well devis'd,

Mid cabinets of ivory improvis'd,  
Six polish'd stairs of oak, with carpet  
laid,  
Reach'd downward to the floor, of cedar  
made :  
Where knights and nobles closely rang'd  
along,—  
Expectant each to hear the minstrel's  
song.  
Melodious music,—then in tones sub-  
du'd,—  
In mellow chords, intoned a sweet  
prelude :  
And, as their echo fill'd the scented air,  
Their signal sang for silence to prepare.  
A noble knight advanc'd in cloth of gold;  
And, like a gentle prince and warrior  
bold,

Proceeded to the high and vacant place  
Beneath the arch ; and, with becoming  
grace,

Made known his glad and kind acknowledg-  
ment

Unto the maid, whose joy reveal'd  
assent.

Now high, then low, the music rose and  
fell,—

Inton'd with sounds as of a tinkling bell ;  
And thus continued, like a gentle breeze  
That sways the branches 'mid the leafy  
trees.

Then forth there came an ancient rustic  
sage,

Whose silver hair accorded with his age :  
Upon his staff he lean'd with one firm  
hand ;

And with the other held the leatherne  
band,

That circl'd round his ample mantl'd  
waist.

In moving nigh he show'd nor fear nor  
haste ;

But halted where the lady could him  
view,

And claim him minstrel honour'd, hale  
and true.

Then all was still, and like a peaceful  
dream ;

And on the face of Athgar,—there a  
gleam

Of sunlight brightly shone, that did  
inspire

His features with a warm poetic fire :  
No thought of hesitation or delay

Conspir'd to thwart his will, or progress  
stay :

But taking 'neath his hand a harp gold  
wrought,

That for his learn'd employment had  
been brought,—

With light and active touch across the  
strings,

He struck the air, as doth the dove's  
white wings.

Alternately the while his features  
chang'd,

As through the paths of harmony he  
rang'd;

Till,—lull'd to peace, and sweet as  
flowers in May,

The notes declin'd; and thus he sang  
his lay :—

“THE MINSTREL’S SONG.”

’Twas evening ; and the western sky,—  
    Tinted with gold,  
Behind the distant mountains high,—  
    Fair to behold.

Rose and amber shades combin’d,  
There to linger undefin’d.  
In their unity of light ;  
Like a rainbow in the night,  
Midway, across the broad green slope,  
That form’d an elevated hill ;  
Where shone the early Springtide Hope,  
Upon that verdant pasture still :  
  
There ;—through the budding flowerets  
    sweet,  
A solitary maid advanc’d :

She craved, nor looked for one to greet ;  
But stoop'd to cull the flowers enhanc'd,  
The more beneath her loving gaze,  
Anon she stay'd to view the land  
That reach'd afar,—aglow with rays  
Emitted from the golden strand.

Alone,—beneath the mountain's shade,  
                All desolate and wild,  
A weary horseman through the glade,  
                With noble brow and mild—

Proceeded on his devious way ;  
Nor urg'd his steed, as through the day,  
                Where speed would but avail :  
But spake in gentle tones and low,  
That e'en would serve to soothe a foe,  
                When other means would fail.

So in the winding track he mov'd,—  
Emerging on a path improv'd,  
    Beyond the rocky steep;  
And through the herbage moist and  
green,  
From whence the knight survey'd a  
scene  
    That made his heart to leap.  
With grateful pleasure to admire  
The light, that made his soul aspire  
    To deeds of chivalry.  
The radiant sunset he beheld,  
Whose bright and purple shades excell'd  
    All fairest imagery.  
And there,—athwart the mountain side,  
A maiden lone, he then espied.  
    “Is Flora nigh?” said he,

In contemplation mild and good ;—  
In thoughtful mood the lady stood :  
    No thought of care had she.

The knight with easy pace advanc'd,  
And o'er the distant landscape glanc'd,  
    That lay all peacefully.

Till on the yielding vernal ground,  
Beside the maid with scarce a sound,  
    His further progress stay'd :

While she with quaint and startl'd  
    look,  
Her pleasing reverie forsook ;—  
    Then her departure made.

“ Stay gentle maiden,”—said the knight,  
“ My wish and sentiment unite,  
    Thy recent joys proclaim.

The splendours of the sunset sky  
More grand doth seem, when thou art  
nigh :  
So do thou here remain."

No further heed the lady paid ;  
Nor longer she her steps delay'd :  
But, with a fleet and active tread,  
She hasten'd down the vale,  
And through the furze ;—away she sped,  
Beyond the flowery dale.

Scarce was the maiden's form unseen,  
Than o'er that sylvan land serene  
The evening shadows fell.

The knight unto the path withdrew,  
And press'd his charger on anew,  
Adown the shaded dell.

“ ‘Tis here,” said he, “ I view the Tower,  
Whereon there gleams the flag of  
Gower,  
Whose ancient name and wide fam’d  
power,  
Have often through an anxious hour,  
The right defended well.

My faithful steed this day hath done  
Enough of toil, and amply won  
The rest and ease that may be found  
Within those solid walls, that bound  
The castle halls secure.

I scarce can pass my friend’s domains,  
That in their strength endure :  
Rememberance of his friendship claims  
My homage to insure.”

Awhile he mused, and thus drew nigh  
Unto the outer gate,  
Where pac'd a sentinel thereby ;  
In service to await.

“Ah! ho; thou warder stout and strong,  
Tell me, I pray,—or right, or wrong ;  
As I in hope surmise,  
If now thy master is within,  
That I may here an entrance win,  
Untrammel'd with disguise.”

“ ’Tis even as thou saith, Sir knight  
The noble earl sojourns this night  
In his ancestral home :  
There lies thy path, the way is free  
To him who is no enemy ;—

A weary pilgrim well may rest,  
And welcome as the honour'd guest,  
Beneath yon fair round dome.

"Thy truthful word becomes thee  
well,—

Rejoin'd the knight "Thy voice doth  
tell

The merits of the just."

Then on he moved, the castle door to  
reach,

Where stood a soldier bold of speech,—  
A Sentinel of trust.

Said he, "Say, stranger, whom thou be ;  
That I may access give to thee,  
And freedom to advance."

Thus spake the knight,—“ Sir Roland I,  
As this my crest doth testify,  
    Of Thaneburg and of France.

Direct me to the inner Court ;  
Announce my credence, and report  
    The knowledge thou hast gained.”

“ All’s well,”—the soldier said ; “ pro-  
ceed ;

Observe to follow where I lead :  
    Thy wish shall be proclaim’d.”

\*       \*       \*       \*

The minstrel here desisted from his song,  
And deftly swept the tuneful strings  
    along ;

Then,—for diversion,—with an alter’d  
tone

Extoll’d the day’s broad warmth, whose  
light there shone :

And while in words of ardent praise he  
sang,  
With inspiration new, his rich voice rang.

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Enshrouded in the dewy mists of morn,  
All nature nestles ’neath the moisten’d  
vale,  
Suffus’d in rainbow gleams ;—their light  
adorn  
The varied spectral forms of hill and  
dale.  
New birth of day around is nigh pro-  
claim’d ;  
Aurora in her golden car is sped,  
And bath’d in amber light, with roses  
chain’d,

Where hovering o'er the lofty peak is  
spread

The fleecy cloud, whose ever changing  
shape

Is wafted on the breeze;—there rais'd  
on high:

The mountain's undulating line endrape  
Grey turret's steep,—all pointing to the  
sky.

Yet on the bosom of the deep ravine,  
Soft misty vapours linger o'er the vale;  
And, rising through the snowy mantle's  
sheen,

The stalwart trees display their myrtle  
mail.

\* \* \* \* \*

Behold the smiling morn, whose infant  
light,

With truth, and love, and generous trust,  
unite ;

In happy concord, and, with grace  
combined,

To crown with heaven's own blessing  
frail mankind.

All nature now in silent grandeur reigns ;  
Nor gratitude of thankful heart remains  
Unknown,—unfelt, or lost to thoughtful  
man ;

The sun completes the work the day  
began,

And rising, doth reflect the Supreme  
Power :

The light of heaven adorns the shining  
hour :

Forth from the East his beauteous light  
displays,

In soft and lucid splendour o'er earth's  
maze ;

That bath'd in dewy moistures of the  
skies,

Full well partakes of virtue ; nor denies  
Her liberal aid, to give new life and birth  
To drooping flow'rs, to herbs, and plants.

All earth ;—

The fields,—the trees,—the sylvan woods  
assume

A richer glow,—harmonic ; and attune,  
In joyous transport,—ringing with delight.  
And praises of the feather'd world, that  
light

They all awake in ecstacy among,  
Each to excel in loudest, sweetest song,

Their bright symphonious concert to  
prolong  
A warbling festivity.

\* \* \* \* \*

All radiant are the rosy shades of morn,  
That chase the twilight through the  
nodding corn.

The verdant fields, and vernal meadows  
gleam,

In emerald beauty cloth'd, the glowing  
scene,—

In birth anew,

Becomes as though a veil,—in gauze of  
gold,

Around the distant land in tinsel fold,  
Would hide a sea of splendours on the  
lea :

That bathe the humid air,—alltenderly,—  
With heavenly dew.

Unbounded theme for reverential thought!  
In broad expanse are nature's wonders  
wrought.

Her endless fields of love united rise :  
They beckon Trust to yield her kind  
surmise

Approvingly.

The hills, whose tow'ring peaks are lost  
among

High pearly plains of distant light along :  
Above their height, and o'er the heavenly  
breeze,

In all her virgin beauty there dwells Spes :  
All lovingly.

Delightful paths of welcome she provides :  
Nor cloud, nor mist impenetrable hides

The azure blue, whose all pervading  
light  
Doth blend the air,—rose-scented, to  
invite  
    Our morning hymn.

The skylark soars aloft on blithesome  
wing,—  
Mounting, rejoicing ; gaily doth he sing :  
And, like a snowflake, or as Autumn leaf  
Descendeth on the heath ; or golden  
sheaf ;  
    Or mountain limb.

\* \* \*

'Twas even thus ;—in accents sweet and  
clear,  
The ancient bard acclaim'd ;—unknown  
to fear.

Then looking upward where the lady  
sate,  
Her kindly smile induc'd him to relate  
The history so recently begun.  
He on without delay his story won.

\* \* \* \* \*

Secluded in a favour'd bower ;—  
Regardful of the evening hour,  
Where soft repose could recreate ;  
Scarce concious of his high estate,  
Reclining on a cushion'd seat,  
In peace—that follows toil and heat,  
In thoughtful meditation free,  
The chieftain ponder'd silently.  
Unto the fading light he turn'd :  
And through the twilight he discern'd  
Soft beauty in the Summer's shade.  
In tones subdu'd these words he said,—

\* \* \* \* \*

“ Harmonious sound, soft music fills  
The evening air, the joyous note  
Comes floating on the breeze, and trills  
A happy strain. Sad and remote  
                The last refrain.

Faintly rings the ling’ring echo ;  
Sweetly sings the silver string :  
Till, deep and low, melodious flow  
The mournful mellow chords, and wing  
                O’er Love’s Domain.

For where my daughter’s voice is heard,  
There dwells the living fount of life :  
There, Peace and Joy,—both undeferr’d,  
Unite to quell all pain and strife ;  
                And joy sustain.



Ah ! here within, new sounds I hear,  
Of footsteps now approaching near :  
Good tidings of the evening meal,  
These indications do reveal."

And, speaking thus ;—across the floor  
He strode toward the open door.

" E'en as my thought but now defined,—  
My steward thou, and squire combined ;—  
A messenger of peace, I trow :  
Since nought of ill doth cloud thy brow."

" 'Tis news of peace I have to tell,  
Of weary knight thou knoweth well,  
Who counsel'd me in few to say,  
The while he journey'd on his way,  
The shades of night their mantle wove  
Across his path, above the grove ;  
And thoughtful for his tir'd steed,  
He hesitated to proceed.

When from the rising hill he view'd  
These friendly halls ;—then all subdu'd  
His every wish to further go :  
Elate with gladness, crav'd to know  
If 'neath thy roof a single night,  
He might repose till morning light,  
Of Thaneberg's Height, Sir Roland he,  
As he doth bid me vouch to thee."

" My friend of yore," Earl Gower said,  
Attend his need ; nor be afraid  
To lend thine aid with willing hand :  
'Tis honour to this house and land.  
When Time and Space in length unite,  
And Truth, with Love, uphold the right ;  
Rememberance of an absent friend  
Doth on our gentle thoughts attend."

## CANTO II.

*Part II.*

The Minstrel paused, and silently observed

That none were slow to hear he had reserved :

But ere his theme of love he did renew,  
A penetrating note an herald blew :  
And through the place,—loud from a  
ringing horn :

Upon the morning breeze, the sound  
was borne,

That echo'd in the wide and lofty hall :  
An oft continued salutary call ;  
Confusion, where but late had peace  
prevail'd,  
And anxious words at being thus assail'd,

Predominated now, without abate,  
Among the maids and nobles there in  
state.

The courtly knight from his distinguish'd  
seat,

Arose in haste the messenger to meet ;  
And, speaking low the lady to appease,  
He then did bid the audience be at ease.  
With energy he moved adown the stair,  
And thro' the hall with undiminished  
care :

He forth with step elate, tho' firm and  
bold,

To hear the news the stranger might  
unfold,

High motive for his progress did supply,  
Where liberal conscience reign'd to  
fortify ;

When nigh the inner vestibule he stay'd,  
There for a space but brief until he bade,  
An arméd officer at once obey  
Zerala's will ; nor venture to delay ;  
But speed there-from, and straightway  
to him guide

The warlike stranger, whom he thought  
to chide.

Then moved he on ; and in a chamber  
near,

Awaited there as one in mood severe.  
Full loud Zerala call'd,—“ Advance  
within,

'Tis not accordant with the bugle's din,  
That thou with timid steps should'st seek  
me here :

Make now the subject of thine errand  
clear.”

The martial stranger then, with low  
salute,

Stood boldly forth, as eager to refute,  
All misconception of his honour'd plea,  
Of which he was commission'd deputy.

He thus in few began his grave dis-  
course :—

“ Mine is no warlike mission, to enforce,  
A knight's obedience to my master's  
will,

If thou his word shall graciously fulfil.  
By his request I am enjoin'd to say,  
That thou his will shall do with no delay;  
From this thine ancient rustic island seat,  
He bids me claim his own, nor brook  
defeat,—

Gwenvolan's only daughter to escort :  
On me devolves the duty I report ;

And now I would advise thee to inform  
The noble maiden that she may conform." "  
Zerala on the stranger sternly gazed,  
Then, in a sonorous tone, his voice he  
raised,

" No lady that within mine house abides,  
And graciously in my just word confides,  
Shall, with my sanction, leave these halls  
with thee ;

Nor for a moment share thy company."

" Then I will hasten, and my steps  
retrace." —

The stranger said, and with a soldier's  
grace,

He warn'd the knight, that, e'er another  
day,

Strong force, his proud resentment should  
repay.

Nor longer there he stay'd to make  
defence;

But from Zeralda's face departed hence;  
Emerging through a porch, he look'd  
around,

And all was peace, and calm, with scarce  
a sound;

A wealth of foliage veil'd the path  
beneath,

And slanting downwards, join'd the  
sombre heath,

That form'd a beach of green to touch  
the lake,

Whose semblance to a mirror did partake.

Then through a winding path he wended  
slow,

That he should safely reach the steps  
below:

Midway, a shining grotto there he  
view'd ;  
And, moving on,—unwilling to intrude,  
The entrance scarce he pass'd, when  
sweet and clear,  
A lady's voice did softly reach his ear,  
In words, whose tone, some trouble  
would infer,  
Constraining him to enter and confer.  
'Twas fair Rozeina, whose considerate  
care,  
Had prompted her unto the shade  
repair ;  
That she her father's embassy might  
see,  
And learn from him the tidings secretly.  
The messenger obey'd the maiden's call,  
And bow'd a glad acknowledgment  
withal.

When thus the lady spake : "Tell me,  
I pray,—

The warning that Gwenvolan bid thee  
say.

'Tis pleasure now to see the famed  
Bertrand,

And welcome to this isolated land."

" Right glad am I, fair mistress," said  
the squire,

" That 'ere I leave this isle, my one  
desire,

Is even thus fulfil'd ; and now, in brief,  
My mission here embraceth thy relief  
From bondage, that usurps a friendly  
guise,

And exile, where for freedom nought  
supplies ;

For if the motive of thine host were just,

His action would awaken kindly trust.  
My master on his couch doth prostrate  
stay,  
Discouraged and brought low with thy  
delay :  
I scarce again before him may appear,  
Unless I bear thy promises to cheer.  
The waters that encompass this fair  
land,—  
Across their depth, I have at my com-  
mand  
Strong men and true, who for Gwen-  
volan's cause,  
With ready zeal defend their country's  
laws,  
Those soldiers bold,—their aid we shall  
not need,  
If thou with me consenteth now to  
speed."

"Encurb thy brave description," said the maid,  
Before thy word in dreams dissolve and fade ;  
Through dangers rife, I have this harbour gain'd,  
The limit of my freedom here attain'd ;  
Until the midnight hour of this same day,  
Mild peace let none disturb,—my will gainsay.  
Above the nearest shore, across the lake ;  
With careful diligence thy station take :  
And when the belfry note rings out the hour,  
Be thou on yonder bank, to view this tower :

Then, if a shining light thine eyes  
behold :

Observe the signal like a star of gold  
Become invisible when thou hath shown  
A corresponding gleam of light thine own.

These are the surest means which I  
devise :

To help thee in thy lawful enterprize.  
Launch thou thy boat, and with three  
chosen men,

Approach this isle unto the shaded glen,  
And for thy passage safely to complete,  
Have care to mark the sign I shall  
repeat ;

So if to these my plans thou doth adhere ;  
And straight for mine illumination steer,  
Close nigh the island crags, from wreck  
secure,

Avoidance of their danger shall be sure.  
Make thou the landing where the flame  
doth burn ;

Nor from thy firm resolve incline to turn :  
But wait until in safety I embark,  
And thus we shall succeed, though night  
be dark.

Depart ;—for hurried footsteps on the  
hill

Do now with warning sounds the crescent  
fill.”

The lady then made haste to join the  
throng,—

Disposed perchance, to hear the Minstrel’s  
song.

“ Rely on me,—thy father’s servant true.”  
And saying thus, the faithful knight  
withdrew.

## CANTO III.

*Part I.*

The guests had all dispersed ; and blithe  
and gay

Had been each one throughout the  
summer day.

The fleeting hours of mirth at last were  
spent ;

And seemingly the silence breathed  
content.

Forsaken were the spacious antique halls,  
Where, loud within their carven wainscot  
walls,

Strange sounds of revelry erst-while had  
reign'd,

Proclaiming festive gladness none dis-  
dain'd.

In soft seclusion sate two maidens fair,  
Who willingly had climb'd the winding  
stair,

To gain the portals of a cool retreat,  
And find the rest they thankfully would  
greet.

"A peaceful night is this, my sweet  
Eleene,—

So calm, and still, and soothingly serene ;  
Methinks 'tis good to breathe the tran-  
quil air ;

And when fatigued, unto repose repair.

'Tis doubtful if Rozeina thus doth feel,

Her pallor told of care she would  
conceal ;

As through this room, unwonted haste  
did mark

Her forward step as ne'er before. But  
hark !

The chiming bells, in solemn cadence  
ring ;  
The hour is nigh for sleep, till morning  
bring  
A new glad day : and even while I  
speak,  
My weary senses doth oblivion seek."

\*       \*       \*       \*

Where are the childlike dreams of love  
and home ;—  
The gentle word that bid Rozeina  
come ?—  
The father's fond persuasive message  
now ;—  
Paternal prayer, that claim'd the maiden's  
vow ?

The mantled lady, girt with cloak and  
hood,  
With fortitude and hope impatient stood :  
Within her perfumed chamber waited  
she,  
And thought of other days,—the glad  
and free ;

Till on a gentle breeze, the soft bell  
note,  
Resounding faint and mellow, seem'd to  
float ;  
Around her lithesome form she closer  
drew  
The ample flowing robes of sombre blue.  
Then, like a brave and modest beauteous  
bride,  
She essay'd forth, her venture to decide.

If in a place conceal'd, in that lone hall,  
Envelop'd in the gloom of night's dark  
pall,

There had been one whose eyes could  
watch and see;

He had beheld a thing of mystery.

For like a stately spectre, wan and pale,—  
With lamp in hand, and o'er her face a  
veil,

An object moved across the cushion'd  
floor;

As though intent on something to  
explore.

'Twas fair Rozeina, who with careful  
tread,

Had left unheard the rest from whence  
she fled:

Nor stay'd she there, to linger or delay;

But close pursued her solitary way ;  
Till, by the polish'd cabinet, alone,  
The rays from her gold lamp on that  
were thrown.  
She quickly proved the knowledge lately  
gain'd,  
And sought the panel she had thus  
attain'd,  
Which 'neath her touch,—along its  
groove, aside  
Did move. Whereat, the chamber dark  
and wide  
Before her all observant eye disclosed,  
Evinced the witness of her quest en-  
closed ;  
Nor hesitated she to enter there ;  
But step'd within. No fetter of despair  
Conspired to thwart her purpose or  
resolve.

With resolution firm, nor to involve  
Delay, at once,—secure as she had  
found,  
The entrance left ; and with one glance  
around,—  
As through the secret way she hasten'd  
on,  
To pierce the darkness drear—her bright  
light shone.

## CANTO III.

*Part II.*

Across the waters ;—on the distant shore,  
With worthy zeal, so often tried of yore :  
All watchful and regardful of their plan,  
Bertrand, with his retainers, long did  
scan

The lonely isle, that in the dark midnight  
Loom'd on the lake, and almost lost to  
sight.

When,—Hark!—the belfry bell doth  
slowly tell

The hour of twelve : and, as the dying  
knell

In silence melts, the last declining note  
Dissolveth like a dream in sleep remote.

Then in the awesome stillness breathed  
a voice  
That said, "Gwenvolan's strength is  
here : the choice,  
Eight valiant men selected from his  
band ;—  
The stout defenders of his ancient  
land ;—  
These shall in parties two at once  
divide ;—  
The four remaining, watchful to abide.  
And when the light beams forth on  
yonder isle,  
Shall then their signal light display the  
while.  
And now,—ye other four,—myself your  
guide :  
Come, hie with me in yonder boat to  
ride."

Then gladly to the water's edge they  
sped,  
And boldly man'd the bark ; nor fear nor  
dread  
Were known to they whose cause was  
just and good :  
But, with a will to plow the teeming  
flood,  
They launch'd the craft, and with their  
strength combined,  
Each plied an oar,—resolved the maid  
to find.

\* \* \* \* \*

When flits a bird of freedom in its cage,  
And 'gainst the gilded bars, his wings  
pressage,  
Far from his captive bondage would he  
fly,

If favour'd with unbounded liberty.  
'Twas even with Rozeina as she press'd,  
The bolts of rusted iron in their rest :  
But all the strength that she could there  
impart,  
Was quite unequal to the builder's art ;  
For there, at last, beneath the arch she  
stood,  
And ponder'd sorely in dejected mood.  
As through the trellis gate, the breeze of  
night  
Play'd on her heated brow and tresses  
light ;  
And while the melting air her strength  
revived,  
The recollection of a means contrived  
To ope the gate, inspired her heart anew :  
That with fond care she did her task  
· pursue.

Suspended secretly a chain she found,  
On which, herself she raised from off the  
ground :

Whereat, her weight, therewith for  
strength became

A force sufficient to derange the frame.  
The massive bolts no longer bar'd the  
way ;

But creak'd aside, as with time-worn  
decay.

The maiden then pull'd on the iron gate,  
And freedom won,—and joy ; to com-  
pensate

For all the dread forebodings she had  
borne.

In patient search, and loneliness forlorn,  
Forth on the outer green she silent  
stood :

Then chose the downward path aside  
the wood.

With pace excursive nigh the bosky hill,  
She hasten'd on within a grove ; until,  
Upon a rising mound,—the waters nigh,  
She halted there, and raised the lamp  
on high.

The symbol of her safety then she  
view'd ;

And with alternate wave, her sign  
renew'd.

Across the lake her anxious gaze was  
bent,

Anticipating then,—of glad portent,  
The witness of her rescue there to see,  
In some approaching object on the lea :  
Nor was her expectation unfulfil'd,  
For, while she look'd, new life her senses  
thrill'd

With wonderous joy : as, steering for  
the shore,  
A boat came gliding on. With each an  
oar,  
Four men defined the long and easy  
stroke ;  
Nor in their care the solemn stillness  
broke.  
Rozeina then with eager glance, descried  
The helmsman, for the nearest inlet  
guide  
The buoyant vessel o'er the rippling  
wave,  
Where sparkling foam arose her sides to  
lave.  
Then down the bank, and on the silver  
strand,  
She waiting stood, to bid the boatmen  
land.

They nearer drew ; and silent on the  
beach

Exchanged a joyful greeting,—each to  
each.

Among the pebbles, with a welcome  
sound,

The boat then grated on the shingle  
ground ;

And while the maiden hesitating stood,  
And scan'd the waters near ; her woman-  
hood,—

Whose good intention there to leap, was  
stay'd :

Her need for some assistance then dis-  
play'd.

With arms extended for Rozeina's aid,  
Bertrand sprang forth ; nor longer he  
delay'd ;

But gently, with a mild and brief  
embrace,  
The maiden he embark'd with courtly  
grace.  
From out the water he aboard then  
climb'd,  
And with good haste to leave the isle  
behind,  
Enjoin'd his men at once to pull away ;  
And sturdily their strength they did  
display.

## CANTO III.

*Part III.*

All watchful on the mainland, and alert,  
Bertrand's retainers, wakeful to assert,  
A faithful vigil on the night veil'd shore,  
Their gaze did oft across the lake  
explore.

With eye all searching o'er the welt'ring  
wave ;—

With resolute intent the maid to save ;  
They sought, and mark'd the starlike  
twinkling gleam ;

And made their answering signal shed a  
beam

Of equal radiance, and responsive light,  
The indication they were bid incite.

Suffused with dew beneath the pale  
moonlight,—

The shores around the lake,—each vale  
and height,

In peace unbroken undisturbéd lay.

'Twas like a dreamless sleep before the  
day.

Adjacent to the western bank where  
grew

The fir tree and the elm,—the bending  
yew,

From 'neath their shade a winding path  
emerged,

And joined the mountain roadway that  
diverged

Around the gradient of the steep hill-  
side,

From nigh the lake, extending far and  
wide.

'Twas o'er that silent land,—all calm and  
still,

The light of moon, and stars pervaded,  
till,

As from another region, sailing high,  
Great dusky clouds were borne across  
the sky.

The arch above grew dense while they  
prevail'd,

And in thick darkness all the earth was  
veil'd.

Then booming from the island on the  
lake,

A warlike sound did then the stillness  
wake :

The salutation of a signal gun  
Declared pursuit, perchance had now  
begun :

And while again the cannon's voice was  
heard,

Repeatedly as oft, the echo stir'd  
As frequently the silence o'er the land,  
That through the air around, the breezes  
fan'd.

Then from the mountain's path above  
the hill,

A sound more pleasant did the defile fill,  
Of rumbling wheels, and clat'ring hoofs  
of steeds,

Continuous as wave on wave succeeds.

From shore to shore, midway, the laden  
boat

Did with her anxious burden lightly  
float.

Each man as one, his pliant oar did  
wield,—

With sweeping curve their equal strength  
reveal'd,

As through the water with such force  
propel'd,

The boat sailed on, all vigorously im-  
pel'd.

When homeward bound, the storm toss'd  
ship rides free,

And gentle breezes kiss the great wide  
sea,

When nearing the shores of a peaceful  
land,

Gladsome are the joys of the friendly  
band.

After fond cherish'd hopes with fears  
distres'd,

The ship sails smooth in the haven of  
rest,

Words of thanksgiving from the heart  
doth rise ;  
And mounteth like a spirit to the skies.  
Not less did fair Rozeina feel the joy,  
Of gratefulness and kindness to employ,  
With those, who for her rescue had  
made good  
Their promised zeal to guide her through  
the flood ;  
When safely nigh the landing place they  
drew,  
And moor'd secure the vessel there anew :  
There, on the shore at last the maiden  
stood,  
And not unmixed with regretful mood :  
Although her heart was glad with  
freedom's store,  
In liberty for which she strived before.

A father's love had call'd her from the  
isle,

Enough,—she mused was this to re-  
concile

The faithless aspect of her evening flight,  
So far conceal'd beneath the shades of  
night ;

Though not to good Zeralda was she  
bound,

The paths of duty circle her around.

But if intent to win her for his bride,  
He in her father's home, would there  
confide

The secret of his love ; and thus constrain  
Gwenvolan's trust ;—his honour'd name  
sustain.

The while, fond thoughts of love incessant  
fill'd

Her maiden's fancy with new hopes that  
    thrill'd

Her fever'd senses with unfathom'd joy ;  
Of Bertrand bold she essay'd to employ  
His further guidance and respectful aid :  
That on the hill, they soon their progress  
    staid ;

For there, beneath a high and lofty tree,  
Three martial men, a coach, and horses  
    three,—

Awaiting all expectant for the sound,—  
A signal in the silent night profound.

No hesitation then Rozeina made ;  
Nor step't within the chaise as one  
    afraid ;

But lightly to the seat for ease design'd,  
With graceful mien she peacefully  
    reclined.

The faithful squire soon seated by her  
side,

In that lone wood, impatient to abide,  
Announced a quick departure, that with  
speed,

The active men accordantly gave heed  
Unto his word, and willingly observed  
Their duties each all vigourously  
enerv'd.

Forth on the wide highway the horses  
wheel'd ;

And rumbling on the hill in gloom con-  
ceal'd ;

On light revolving wheels, the coach of  
state

Made quick advancement,—like a thing  
elate,

And from the shade, like spectres in the  
gloom,

More objects on the roadway there did loom.

Gwenvolan's stout retainers, bold and brave,

Who did their master's will the maid to save,

Their tether'd horses they had gaily freed,

And mounted, as before Bertrand decreed ;  
That on before as one and in the rear,  
They rode amain in joyous glad career ;  
And through the mountain's undulating vale,—

Across the fertile hills,—above the dale ;  
Then on the ancient wellworn firm highway,

Where on each side, the level pastures lay,

With pace unbroken,—through the land  
unseen,

Till early morn reveal'd the meadows  
green,

With her equestrian company to guard,  
The fair Rozeina's progress was un-  
mar'd.

No hindrance there arose the flight to  
blight ;

Nor barrier to oppose the might of  
right. . . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

On Merville Tower, when, in the break  
of day,

The dawn reveal'd her pearly shades of  
grey ;

There in his place, a sentinel pursued

A patrol's duty as in time of feud.  
And oft he turn'd his gaze the land to  
view ;  
And oft he paused to speculate anew ;  
Till from the fragrant leafy glen below,  
Upon the breeze there flow'd a faint  
echo,  
As of a near approaching cavalcade ;—  
A distant sound that issued from the  
glade.  
'Twas then the watchful sentinel refrain'd  
From further progress, and his step  
detain'd ;  
While with attentive ear, and rapid  
glance,  
He heard and saw the martial train  
advance.  
He scrutinized the band that nearer drew :

Then with his sounding horn a call he  
blew,

While through the woods, and o'er the  
hills around,

An answering signal made the heights  
resound.

The wakeful guard had recognized the  
note,—

The glad familiar cry across the moat.  
He hasten'd then the heavy chains to  
reach ;

And made the bridge secure to span the  
breach.

Within the ancient hall,—her dear lov'd  
home ;—

Along the corridor, beneath the dome  
The fair Rozeina lingered to rejoice ;

Expectant soon to hear her father's voice.

While there she paused, a servitor advanced;

And on the maiden's form he scarcely glanced;

Till she, with gentle words, his haste detain'd:

Enjoining him to say if he had gain'd  
Permission thus to wander from his rest;  
As one with fear, and grief, and care  
distrest.

“ ‘Tis even now my work is done,” said he :

“ And lo! my homage now I give to thee.

By those, who with my master watch  
and stay,

I was commanded forth to guard the  
way :

That, while in sleep, he calmly doth  
repose,

No foe shall mar the peace these walls  
enclose."

"Disturb him not,"—the maiden said :  
    " The day

Is scarce begun ; nor light hath chased  
away

The shadows of the night that lately  
veil'd

Our journey,—often with their gloom  
assail'd.

But when thy master wakes, to him make  
known

My glad return, that I to thee have  
shown."

Rozeina then unto her rooms withdrew,  
Where waited joyful maidens kind and  
true ;

And for a space, soft gentle sleep con-  
spired

To soothe the weariness her need  
required.

When on that bright and sunny day of  
June,

The chiming bells proclaim'd the hour of  
noon,

All clad in white, a lady softly sped  
Along the ancient hall with eager tread.

Beside a pearl-like portal pauséd she,  
And pull'd a silken cord expectantly :

When soon the oaken door was open'd  
wide,

As for her instant entrance to provide.

She linger'd not the officer to greet ;  
But,—with a countenance all fair and  
sweet,  
Forth through the vestibule, with smiles  
of love  
She enter'd like the fond returning dove.  
Before Gwenvolan,—on his couch re-  
clined,  
Ere'while her gentle purpose he de-  
sign'd,—  
She paused : that consciousness his  
features fired  
With animating memories inspired.  
“ Is that my child ? and is Rozeina  
near ?—  
’Tis like a vision as in dreams appear.  
Ah ! now thy fond caress convinceth me,  
That with mine eyes, my daughter's face  
I see.

No will have I to give thee needless pain,  
In chiding thee, when thou art here  
again,

Unto thy father's dwelling safe return'd.  
'Tis gladness,—and with joy we are  
concern'd."

"'Tis even so : as day exceeds the night,  
So shines thy love ; but with unfading  
light."

These, with a soothing voice, the maiden  
said ;

And carefully the recent days survey'd,  
Until, upon the couch, where he repos'd,  
Gwenvolan there in sleep his eyelids  
closed.

'Twas then Rozeina softly moved away,—  
Intent on quick return and longer stay.

## CANTO IV.

*Part I.*

Nine times the land in robes of night  
was veil'd;

And day's alternate light and warmth  
prevail'd:

When good Gwenvolan, with his daughter  
fair,—

From Merville height to breathe the  
morning air,—

Rode gaily forth across the meadows  
green,

To gain the vale beyond, that lay unseen.

Attendant in the rear, six horsemen  
brave,

To guard the twain, their martial duty  
gave.

Rozeina on her sable steed did ride :  
While lovingly, there linger'd by her side  
Two ladies,—each on dappled palfrey  
borne :  
Of one, the tint of golden autumn corn  
Would liken to her spangled flowing  
hair.

The other maiden's tresses would compare,  
And aptly with a silken seal. Her eyes,—  
Expressive,—told of zeal for enterprize.  
As through the shaded dale the group  
traversed ;  
And by the stream, whose rippling tide  
immersed  
The pliant reed, and tender lily's stem,  
The birds above attuned the winding  
glen.

'Twas then unto the maid the chieftain  
said,—

"Methinks the rosy hue of white and  
red,

Suffuséd on thy cheek, becomes thee  
well ;

Whereon the charm of nature's kiss doth  
dwell.

Now is the day on which we may agree,  
With one assent, the rural fête to see :  
Our journey thence, before the midday  
hour,

With ease will be accomplish'd to the  
tower,—

The ancient seat of bold Sir Amozel,  
Whose name,—both near and far,—is  
known so well ;

For generous deeds, and charity as free ;—

Approved for heroic chivalry.  
'Tis he, whose declaration I recall,  
But recent made to me in yonder hall.  
'Twas thee of whom he spake, with  
mild reserve,  
And admiration true ;—which to ob-  
serve,—  
To me enlarged his virtues that were  
least,—  
My good esteem, and trust in him  
increased.  
Though midway in the span of life's  
long day,  
With youthful fire his manliness is gay.  
Along the western slope,—extending far,  
One bound'ry serves our fruitful lands  
to bar.  
Thus my estate and his, do both cojoin,

And seemingly, they each in one combine.  
If thou consenteth soon, and he partake  
Of joys that with a fond regard awake,  
Then shall a father's blessing greet thine  
ear,

With unity and love his age to cheer."

Gwenvolan paused, when thus the  
maiden said,—

" My father's voice I hear : therefore,  
no dread  
Of ought ungracious maketh me repine,  
When this advice for good is none but  
thine.

The day is bright in contrast to the  
night,  
And hides the darkness with the morn-  
ing light.

As like the rays decending from above,—

A maiden's heart directeth her in love :  
But while my will is thine to mould and  
bend,

Thy words of counsel shall my life  
defend.

Some future day my destiny may be,  
Of that fulfilment 'tis thy wish to see.

Now with thy present purpose I concur,  
In thus proceeding, while we may  
confer."

Communing thus, the maid her pace  
improved ;

And onward in the sylvan path they  
moved.

## CANTO IV.

*Part II.*

From groves of laurel, where the zephyrs  
blow

Soft whispers of the muse, their faint  
echo :

Are these the inspiration of my theme ?  
Shall they,—their voice, my song from  
death redeem ?

Ask of the forest trees, whose branches  
sway,

And wave their vernal garb in bright  
array :

All silent they, until a gentle breeze  
Sighs in their midst, as like the Autumn  
lease

Of parchéd corn, beneath the gleaner's  
hand

Collectively that rustle o'er the land.

And thus for answer whisper they around,  
Till all are still, as in a night profound.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beside a level meadow, broad and green,  
Adjacent to a valley, that between  
Two rising hills, a stream incessant  
flowed :

Where on its bank there stood a fair  
abode,—

An edifice of grandeur that display'd  
Inreaséd brightness, when the morn  
array'd

Their fair dimensions with expansive  
light ;

Whose graceful turrets crown'd the castle  
height,  
And still more grand their high propor-  
tions seem'd,  
When 'neath the lofty gothic archway  
gleam'd  
Rare splendours of a knightly martial  
throng,  
That moved with regulated pace along.  
In armour bright, each noble horseman  
rode ;  
While on the breeze his silken pennon  
flow'd.  
And bravely borne the crested banners  
waved ;  
And bright the corselet shone ; and helm  
engraved  
With fair and ancient heraldry, encased

As though with threads of silver interlaced.

Attendant on each knight, and in his rear,

The dutiful esquire follow'd near.

Then in the van of that distinguish'd band,

That forth advancéd through the verdant land ;

A company of titled maidens fair,

Contributed a beauteous aspect there.

In many colour'd robes they gaily sate ;  
While lightly they conversed in tones elate.

Soon to the open meadow through the glade,

The long procession wended 'neath the shade ;

And orderly advanced the cavalcade,  
Till nigh a level green, a halt was made.  
On either side that smooth and grassy  
plain,

Both firm and strong, erected to sustain  
A large proportion of the fair and free,  
A gallery beneath a canopy,—  
All skilful plan'd on good foundation  
stood;

Contriv'd from the dry and season'd  
wood.

And many were the guests who waited  
there;

While golden music floated on the air:  
Co-equal with the harmonizing sound,  
In joyful cadence did their hearts re-  
bound.

Then in their place,—the ladies to locate,

A courteous knight of noble good estate,  
There for a space of time,—though brief,  
    became

An escort to each gentle blithesome  
    dame.

Then loud the herald's bugle note pro-  
    claim'd

The advent of their chief renown'd and  
    famed.

Quick to obey the sounding trumpet's  
    call,

The steel clad warriors, knights and  
    soldiers all,

Made each their entrance in the lists  
    below,—

Their eagerness for action there to show.  
And many were the greetings then ex-  
    changed ;

As round Sir Amozel the courtiers ranged.

Sir John de Vere was there, of Erlin Hey;

From Arden Fell, the stout old Baron Grey;

The famous knight,—the bold and strong Lémar,

To join his friends, had journey'd from afar.

Though time was brief, permitted to employ;

'Twas good to see their heartiness and joy,

In thus reposing in each other's care ;—

A recognition all were proud to share.

Shrill was the call that issued from the horn,

As o'er the green again the note was  
borne.

And scarce the echo melted on the wind,  
Than drums and silver trumpets all  
combined,

To liquify the clash and clang of arms,  
Whereof the sound amid the music's  
charms,

Was nigh extinguish'd in the midday  
heat.

And like the flowing tides where rivers  
meet,

A long procession form'd, with equal  
pace,

The soldiers did their even footsteps  
trace.

And so continued in their onward march,  
Until they reach'd a great triumphal  
arch,

That span'd the southern entrance to the  
square.

'Twas then in long array they halted  
there.

Scarce was the captain's stern command  
obey'd,

Than in their midst a messenger con-  
veyed

Important tidings of a new portent,  
And urgent warning of the first event.

Forth step'd Bevune of Arle, the worthy  
knight :

"Why hasteth thou," said he, "Do we  
unite,

In this our strength,—and thus to be  
assail'd?

Give us thy news, that we shall be  
prevail'd

To pardon thy intrusion at this hour :  
Declare in brief the motive of thy  
power."

The horseman deftly then rein'd in his  
steed,—

Unwilling from his purpose to recede.  
With low salute, in courteous words he  
spake :

" Mine errand here sufficeth me to take  
Fair liberty,—to seek thee, and pronounce  
The information I am bid announce.  
The bells that now are ringing on the  
hill,

Intone the signal of the baron's will ;  
That when their chimes in silence have  
dissolved,

Eight gilded cars,—all sumptuously in-  
volved,

With shining splendour shall at once  
appear ;

And under guidance of a charioteer.

For each thereof shall through the  
meadow leap,—

And through the shade, as from the silent  
deep,—

Four chosen horses, as on wings upborne,  
Enyoken to each car. The star of morn  
Likenneth the subject of my further  
speech :

For, looking down the hill, across the  
reach,

Far in the vista of yon distant plain,  
I chanced me to observe, and to obtain  
The insight and conception to my ken,  
Which same I turn'd me to behold again ;  
Whereof the proof is this ;—that thou  
may'st see

Approaching, with an order'd unity,  
A small equestrian group, that even now  
An aspect doth portray, which I avow  
To be of much import. A banner white,  
As they advance, doth wave aloft ; and  
bright

Their gleaming arms appear. "Then,  
herald, haste ;  
Nor at this time more precious moments  
waste,"—

The knight replied : "for so I am dis-  
posed  
To send an escort through the glade,  
composed  
Of twelve selected men, to meet our  
friends,—  
If such they be ; for thee, Bevune com-  
mends

Thy vigilance, and activeness no less,  
In making known to me, with short  
address,  
The information of the charioteers.  
And now begone ; and warn thy brave  
compeers,  
To make their entrance with a gentle  
rein,  
With dicipline their order to sustain."

## CANTO IV.

*Part III.*

How fared Zeralda since that night of  
woe,  
Of fair Rozeina's flight 'tis well to know.  
With that brave knight our thoughts are  
apt to dwell :  
Of all his sorrows, who shall truly tell ;  
When, from the turmoil of a festive day,  
He sought his couch : the evening  
twilight grey  
In darksome night had waned ; and, like  
the calm  
That after storm succeeds, a healing  
balm  
Of all pervading silence there reposed,

Enfolden in forgetfulness composed.  
Scarce had the knight unto his rest  
retired,  
Than wakeful thoughts prolific then  
conspired.

Impervious of sleep to render him,  
That stir'd each nerve with life in every  
limb.

In meditation ponder'd he full long,  
As doth the poet with his tuneful song :  
And, for a space, all silently he mused,  
Till into speech his reverie infused  
Interpretation,—audible and low,  
In words of warmth unconsciously aglow.  
“ Wherefore,”—he said, “ In this, the  
midnight hour  
Are these my thoughts disturb'd, soft  
slumber's power

To soothe my pain, of influence hath  
none ;  
And like my guests that to their homes  
have gone,  
My fairest dreams are but as falling  
snow,  
That in the winter on yon lake below,  
Descendeth there to melt ; yet why  
repine ?  
The present with the future to combine,  
Avaleth not my need. What though  
my will  
Gwenvolan's wrath to reconcile ; until  
The maiden to her father be restored,  
Refuted oft hath been, despised, ignored :  
Yet 'tis mine earnest purpose to defend  
The honour of mine house ;—for that  
contend :

And when this night, the light of morn  
succeeds,

Ere in the day my firm resolve recedes,  
With me unto her father shall be ta'en  
The fair Rozeina, safely home again."

But hark! the tolling bell rings out the  
sound,

And breaks the silence of the isle around.  
Perchance a sign of some invading band,  
That now encroacheth on this peaceful  
land."

While thus the chieftain thoughtfully  
surmised,

With action swift he mentally devised  
The nature of his movements for defence,  
That, ere in arms he stood, the con-  
sequence

Of his designing aptitude. Yet more

And louder warning had he than before.  
“Now is the booming cannon belching forth,  
The piece that on the turret sweeps the north.  
Methinks my term of rest this night is o'er :  
These warlike sounds recall the days of yore.”  
Then, from his chamber, resolute and strong,  
He forth advanced to battle with the wrong.  
Few words Zeralda spake, when from the beach  
He view'd the waters o'er ;—his vassals each  
In wonder stood amazed, to see no sign

Of anger, or dismay, with devious line  
His brow to mar ; for he had duly  
learn'd

The mystery of night,—the cause dis-  
cerned.

He turned him from the shore as one  
resigned ;

And with reserve, — apparently de-  
signed,—

His inmost thoughts to hide. With  
words in brief,

Betoken'd he his will ; and, like the  
chief

Who looketh on the deeds of valour  
done,

And feels the victory of conquest won,  
'Twas even then with equal pride he  
spake,

And said : "'Tis thus,—that love doth  
love forsake,  
Not oft. Most admirable stratagem,  
In which for evil none may I condemn :  
And though from this mine hospitable  
land,  
The noble lady by her own command  
So well her flight hath secretly contrived,  
That to reclaim her here we are deprived ;  
Yet, in my admiration of her deed,  
Relief from care my loss doth supercede.  
So ere anew the morning dawns again,  
Let all my force from further strife ab-  
stain ;  
That soon, their lovelorn natures may  
conceive  
The virtue of sweet rest, and life retrieve ;  
For when the radiance of to-morrow's  
sun

Aboundeth in another day begun,  
My purpose is to venture on the field,  
With arméd men array'd with sword and  
shield.

Within the space from this of three good  
days,

Our journey shall be done with no  
delays ;—

Omitting always at the evening hour,  
When for refreshment and the slumbers  
bower—

A halt be made to give essential rest,  
And he who sleeps in peace will fare the  
best.

Now get you to your chambers, soldiers  
all,

That, wakeful ye may hear the bugle  
call :

Of our departure then the hour announce ;—

Let all obey these orders I pronounce."

When thus Zeralda had his will made known,

And full the project of his purpose shown,

No longer then he waited for reply ;

But hasten'd to his couch right manfully.

If these extending lines were to enlarge  
With long description,—laden with the  
charge

Of infinite narration,—wrought with care,

The task would be but simple to declare.

To tell in few, when first the morn  
appear'd,

And summer's warmth the fair bright  
landscape cheer'd,—

How buoyantly, across the lake's ex-  
panse,

The chieftain with his retinue did  
advance ;

And how, when once the mainland they  
regain'd,

And each his warlike noble steed  
obtain'd,

Within the homestead that adjacent  
stood ;

Then essay'd forth with bravest hardi-  
hood.

And so pursued their onward course  
each day ;

Until they reach'd the halls of Baron  
Grey,

'Twas here the chieftain with his faithful  
men,

From further wayfaring desisted then.

Thus, in the evening hour, Zeralda found

A rendezvous in peace, encircled round  
The castellated arbour of his friend ;  
Whose outer walls were equal to defend  
The grand old Towers within from  
hurtful harm :

The aspect of their grandeur gain'd a  
charm  
Of richer beauty in the sun's broad  
gleams,

Whose rays translucent shone in golden  
beams.

'Twas here the chieftain and his soldiers  
bold,—

Collectively,—as in one common fold,  
Enjoy'd the rest sufficient for their need :  
So doth his flock the tender shepherd  
lead.

And thro' the twilight of the evening  
shade—

Dissolving in the air, o'er mount and  
glade,  
Pervading moistures bathed the land  
around ;  
While from the woods, there came the  
crystal sound,  
Of congregating birds in song so sweet ;  
Soft notes, that e'en the night seemed to  
repeat  
Their wonted hymn of sympathetic  
praise.  
Whereof the sound inspired the chief to  
raise  
His genial voice in mild request for all,  
That presently inside the outer wall,  
The faithful warder render'd he his  
skill,  
Efficiently his calling to fulfil.

That each good horseman with his steed  
should find,

Refreshment sure peculiar to his kind.

Nor less of joy did bold Zeralda feel,  
When with his friend, unmindful to  
conceal

The fervour of his gladness, to behold  
In one whose provéd worth in days of  
old,—

The hero who had oft his fortunes  
shared;

And for his gain gigantic dangers dared.  
'Twas past the midnight hour, when each  
arose

To seek the comforts of a calm repose.

And not until had pas'd the Day of Rest,  
Did Baron Grey,—accoutred in the  
best,—

Assemble on the green his martial  
train,—

A chosen few he honour'd to retain ;  
When forth the order went at early  
morn ;

The soldiers had obey'd the sounding  
horn ;

Co-equal with Zeralda's sprightly band,  
They each and all were ready at  
command.

It needeth not on further words to  
dwell,—

Expressive of their progress through the  
dell,

Or o'er the height, and cultivated land,  
That all expansive lay. With steady  
hand

The rein was held. All cheerful and  
bright

Each day they rode,—save in the dark-  
some night,  
When for reviving elements of sleep,  
From nourishment more energy to reap,  
They halted each in unison of mind ;  
And in the morn,—with strength and  
will combined,  
Again with vigour, and with life renew'd,  
To reach the chieftain's halls,—their  
march pursued.

## CANTO IV.

*Part IV.*

Now turn we to the scenes of gaiety,—  
The antique lists of ancient Haerliem  
Lea ;

Where belted knights had, through the  
day, engaged

In vanquishing his foe: nor yet enraged  
As with an enemy; but sportive all;—  
With none of hate or anger to appal.

The contests of the day were long begun.  
By some were trophies lost;—by others  
won,

Each comely worthy knight of fair re-  
nown,

Had inly strived to gain the victor's  
crown :

And, ere the last event was entertain'd,  
There came a pause : though ques-  
tioned,—unexplain'd.

When through the archway on the  
western side,

A warrior brave on noble steed did ride ;  
The history of kings records the name  
Of one, who in succession third became ;  
A son had he, for equal virtue famed,  
Who, for distinction, the Black Prince  
was named.

And this bold knight, who on the field  
advanced ;—

Whose burnish'd arms upon his breast-  
plate glanced ;—

Who, conscious of past deeds of valour  
done,

Was even like the brave King Edward's  
son.

But, ere we further linger to observe  
His goodly presence and benign reserve,  
'Tis well, in this narration, to relate  
In few that onward in the theme create  
Of other scenes, a history to tell ;—  
Where, in the midst, there stood Sir  
Amozel ;

Who, when the day's rejoicings part  
were o'er,

Had in the shade withdrawn, and  
ponder'd sore.

Though soon again to join the noble  
throng,

Had not in rest alone debated long.

'Twas Earl FitzJames on whom his  
search was bent,—

As, to and fro, his guests and colleagues  
went ;

When lo, as turning in his path around,  
The friend he most desired to see, was  
found.

Then unto him with confidence he spake,  
While all his speech of trust seemed to  
partake.

“ Right glad am I to meet thee here,  
And once again—my friend—thine heart  
to cheer.

Let these my words of welcome testify,  
That I on thee explicitly rely.

Here once again,—as in the days of  
yore,—

The warlike pastimes now are almost  
o'er :

And ere the last event is consummate,

I have another plan'd to compensate  
For ought of disappointment or dismay,  
To those who had no triumph in the  
fray.

Of all the knights courageous who have  
wrought

Their deeds of merit, and the laurels  
sought ;—

Yet is there one that presently shall try  
The prowess of the best who him defy.

And now, of thee I would a ruler make,—  
If thou of this good service will partake  
To represent me in the open field ;

And also in the lists the right to shield.  
For other duties have I to perform,

Which render me unable to conform,  
In supervizing with attentive care,

The progress and conclusion just and  
fair.

More of the stranger knight I have to  
say ;  
That if of indiscretion he display,  
Or disregard of chivalrous restraint,  
Then stay not for me, of this to acquaint ;  
But of thine own accord thy wisdom  
show,  
And chastisement,—which thine is to  
bestow—  
On him who acteth ill do thou dispense.  
And unto they who do not give offence,—  
Let them have opportunity to prove  
The merits of their skill in deeds of love.  
'Tis even thus : provision hath been  
made,  
For he who wilfully the games degrade.  
Detain him as a prisoner of war ;  
And for his guard appoint the brave  
Lémar.

For answer, then FitzJames did briefly  
say,—

“ These thy commands 'tis pleasure to  
obey :

The honour which thou on me hath  
confer'd

Is of esteem the best when thus prefer'd.  
Then each in turn his mutual zeal de-  
clar'd ;

And with a warm adieu, they nought  
despair'd.

## CANTO V.

*Part I.*

Like murmurs in the forest on the  
breeze,  
That breathe full loud among the leafy  
trees :  
As on the beach the foaming rollers  
break,  
And in their backward flow the sands  
forsake :  
Like waves tumultuous on the shining  
stream,  
That o'er the cliffs and crags in volume  
teem.  
Thereof the sound, their equal could  
be found,

Within the lists that fill'd the air around,  
When through the throng assembled in  
the west,

An anxious tremour fil'd each beating  
breast.

As in their midst a stranger knight  
appear'd,—

Firm seated on a steed that light  
career'd,

Replete was he in armour dark as night ;  
And like the hue of jet his horse as  
dight.

No opposition hinder'd his progress,  
As forward he advanced. The wide  
egress

That on the eastern side converged, was  
closed ;

And all who would there pass, the  
guards opposed.

The black mysterious horseman look'd  
around ;—  
A moment paused, and eyed the level  
ground.  
Then with a searching gaze and rapid  
glance,  
He well observed, and mark'd each  
circumstance,  
And situation of the maidens fair,  
That occupied their place with modest  
air.  
As o'er the scented blossoms, bright and  
gay,  
The bee industrious hovers through the  
day,  
And where the flowers plenteous gorgeous  
grow,  
Doth in the summer sunshine to and fro,

From one fair bloom unto another fly,  
And in the twilight homeward straight  
doth hie :  
So this brave knight, with admiration  
moved,  
To view the gentle dames his pace  
improved ;  
He from his course direct nor once di-  
verged ;—  
Nor yet his charger undecorous urged ;  
Till scarce beneath the balcony he staid,  
And in their place the favoured guests  
surveyed.  
Then at his feet,—descending from above,  
A simple token fell,—a lady's glove.  
He turn'd his horse around with gentle  
rein,  
Therewith his sword the gauntlet to  
regain :

Swept deftly as he stoop'd and thus to  
lift,  
The fragile silk he pierced ; the action  
swift  
A delicate and graceful art proclaim'd,  
As, with his sword, the knight the glove  
reclaimed ;  
The prize with mailéd hand extended  
high,  
He offer'd to the maid, who timidly  
Her sweet acknowledgment, and thanks  
avow'd,  
In words whose tone a tenderness  
endow'd.  
And ere again from him she back with-  
drew,—  
Not louder than to reach her ear, in few—  
The armour'd soldier said, “Feel no  
alarm

At this my voice; and unto thee no  
harm

Shall then befall; few days have lately  
sped,

Since to his island home, Zeralda led  
The lady of his choice. 'Twas love and  
joy

They innocently shared;—with no alloy  
Of bitterness, until the midnight hour,  
When fair Rozeina then forsook her  
bow'r.

But yet;—not distant far the day may  
be,

When thou and he, in plighted unity,  
Shall solemnize the matrimonial vow,  
And then his love for thee,—as even  
now,—

In true and faithful constancy, will bless

And cherish thee with fruitful happiness."

No more in mild discourse the knight  
was heard,

As shrill the trumpets call,—till now  
defer'd—

In notes tumultuous sounded loud and  
long;

And like a clanging bell, or brazen gong,  
Strong arms on drums and cmybals  
rattled free,

That echo'd thro' the air incessantly.

Then forth there rode a herald on the  
green,

And took his station in the space be-  
tween

The bound'ry of the north and south  
confines.

Along the east and west the marshalled  
lines

In warlike order stood ;—when on the  
field

A mounted soldier, girt with sword and  
shield,

With confidence advanced ; nor stay'd  
until

Beside the herald waiting to fulfil,

Whate'er of declaration or decree,

To be announced thereof by him should  
be.

Then all was silent for a moment's space,  
When, from a parchment roll, with  
soldier's grace,

In sonorous voice and clear, that all  
might hear,

The herald thus began :—“ All ye that  
here

Within the sound and measure of my  
voice,

Who have this day assembled to rejoice,  
In contemplation of true chivalry ;  
Now with attention hearken unto me  
“ ’Tis thus appointed, as I here declare,  
For those good knights who have de-  
signed to share,  
Approvedly their horsemanship and  
skill,  
In deeds of valour, wherein nerve and  
will  
Are indispensable. A laurel crown  
Shall be the just reward ; and fair  
renown  
Each honour’d name shall grace. And  
for the knight ;—  
If such he be, who hath usurp’d the right  
But late to enter uninvited here,—  
Thus far in arms audacious to appear ;—

On this broad green he soon shall be  
chastized,

And taken captive if he hath devised  
A plan of ought which may not lawful  
be ;—

These are the tokens of my heraldry.”  
Advancing near, the black armed horse-  
man rode,

And on the herald watchfully bestow’d  
A scrutinizing glance. His bridle rein  
Hung loose and careless, like a pliant  
chain.

“Vain words,” said he, “are thine, which  
me defy;

And foolish is thy simple vanity.

Lay by thy horn ; nor let thy voice be  
heard :

For e’en too long my time hath been  
defer’d.

Why linger there, and hesitate? Away!  
Or stay, while I thine insolence repay.  
'Tis thus I cleave thy bridle rein in  
twain,

My brand is keen; so tempt me not  
again."

His steed, from whence he came, the  
herald led;

While, forging on the field, the heavy  
tread

Of mounted horses made the ground  
vibrate,

And silent, as expectant to await  
The ultimate development and end,

The awed spectators waited to attend;

Around the noble but offending knight  
The soldiers in their burnish'd armour  
bright

A circle form'd, when from their midst  
stood forth

Sir John de Vere of honourable worth.

"This day of sport," he said, "is well  
nigh spent,

And all the games thereof, that represent  
The customs of the pass'd, have been  
rehearsed,

With modern entertainment interspersed,  
The final episode doth yet remain  
To be attain'd, appointed to retain  
The fame of Amozel; this stranger bold  
Whoe'er he be, with conduct uncon-  
troll'd,

Must first receive the measure that is  
mete—

Of lawful judgment, proper and discreet."

Sir John then on the stranger knight did  
look,

And with a fixéd glance of stern rebuke,  
He thus began. "'Tis thee of whom we  
speak,

Nor would we here another method seek,  
To make thee subject of admonishment,  
Or argue of our own astonishment,  
At thy encroachment on this vantage  
ground,

Where loyalty and welcome friends  
abound.

If thy demeanour had been more re-  
served,

Thy presence here would then have been  
observed

With full extension of profound respect ;  
But since thine action hath evinced  
neglect

Of that decorum which evokes esteem,

There is but one alternative, and theme  
Of procedure that we extend to thee,  
Our willingness to hearken to thy plea ; ”  
In vain he paused for some response to  
    hear,

While nigh the stranger knight he drew  
    more near,  
And thus resumed, “ Why doth thou  
    silent stand,

When freedom may be gain’d by speech,  
    thine hand

More active is than is thy tongue to move,  
Unlock thine helm, that we may fairly  
    prove

Thy just identity ; obdurate still,  
Then hold thy secret undiscern’d, until  
Within a guarded chamber, thy discourse,  
A sterner measure may our will enforce,

Relinquish now thy sword, nor fail to  
heed,

Renounce thy purpose, nor ignore our  
need

Of thy obedience ; and our care shall be  
To furnish thee in due conformity,

With more attention than would else  
condone

Unto thy comfort and thy peace alone."

'Twas then among the gentle maidens  
fair,

A murmur as of sadness and despair,  
Breathed for a space, as there like melt-  
ing dew,

Their hopes, which they had ventured  
to construe,

Dissolvéd like a dream when night hath  
fled ;

For, looking, they beheld their hero led,  
In close captivity ; with gaze intent,  
Upon the stranger knight each eye was  
bent ;  
A maiden saw the dark retreating form,  
The lady, who but recently had borne,  
The rapture of his love illumined  
glance,  
That so conspired her nature to entrance  
With hope's simplicity ; engrossed was  
she  
In contemplation of futurity,  
No outward sign of inward care appear'd  
To testify of sorrow she revered.  
As there, unmoved, and waiting to abide,  
She heard at last the bells of eventide,  
And as the mellow notes resounded clear,  
Ding, dong, upon the breeze came float-  
ing near ;

Yet, not alone had she to meditate,  
Nor for a longer term in grief to wait,  
As there, beside her with a father's care,  
Gwenvolan stood, nor was he then  
aware,

That ought of sadness had sufficed to  
lend

Unto her heart, a wish to comprehend  
The mystery of love to soothe her woe,  
Until her inclination to forego  
The joys of recognition, and of speech,  
Involved the silent evidence to each.

"Methought," said he, "my daughter  
would rejoice

At this late hour to hear her father's  
voice,

'Tis not thy wonted custom to repine,  
Nor is it now my purpose to resign

The gentle duty that on me devolves,  
Which is, to guide thee as my will  
resolves,

More trying than constrain'd captivity,  
Is forced exemption from activity.

But now to compensate, is peace ensured,  
For that, which thou in patience hath  
endured;

Good news have I for thee, that may  
subdue

Thy tendency to mourn ; to live anew,  
Within the light of tenderness and love,  
This is for thee to choose, and to approve;  
Not forward in the field hath been my  
friend,

While other knights assembled to con-  
tend,

This day in arms, have manfully sustain'd

The customs of the past and honours  
gain'd,

But good Sir Amozel, more care hath he  
For others welfare, and their joys to see ;  
Alternate rest avails a sweet resource,  
Thus for a term with me he held dis-  
course,

And glad was he when I pronounced  
thy name,

If sad before, his weakness then became  
The strength of one who faithfully relies  
Upon the spoken word that truth implies,  
He bade me tell thee of his joy to know  
That thou wert near, and linger'd to  
bestow

The simple token of an honest friend,  
On me, for thine acceptance to commend ;  
So now, his signet ring I give to thee,

And none more willing to comply than  
he—

To gratify thy wish, if ought there be  
Of his, that claims thy curiosity,"  
The maiden with a bridled eagerness,  
Acknowledged then her fortune to  
possess

The jewelled ring, for surely thought  
she,

It were an easy task, as with a key  
Without restraint to enter, and explore  
The chambers of Sir Amozel, and o'er  
Yon mansion range. "The circlet I  
receive,"

The lady said, "And gratefully perceive  
The donor's warm intent, but more of  
joy

At thy return, my thoughts and love  
employ."

Unto the stately halls that stood in view,  
'Twas then they each with one accord  
withdrew.

## CANTO V.

*Part II.*

Traversing in the gloom with silent tread,

In flowing robes and veil envelopéd,

Along a smooth and tessellated floor,

Beneath the arches of a corridor,

An eager anxious maiden onward sped,

Nor in her mission had she ought of dread,

As nigh the guarded entrance she advanced,

Whereon the graven portals gleam'd and glanced

The silvern lamp rays of the watchful ward,

Who waited there in solitude as guard ;  
Respectful then he spake unto the maid,  
And sternly though persuasively he said :  
“ My duty binds me to enquire of thee  
If some momentous deed of urgency,  
Is thine to do, for there are few would  
dare  
To venture here, without a guide to  
share  
The enterprise,” impatient of delay,  
With bold remark that argued no dismay,  
Unto the sentinel the lady turn’d,  
And answer’d thus,—“ Thine eye hath  
not discern’d  
The cause in me of one that would in-  
trude,  
And yet art thou with consciousness en-  
dued,

Of my intention, which is to request,  
That thou wilt now proceed to manifest  
The virtue of obedience to my plea,  
And give me access, with admission, free  
Of all remonstrance to thy prisoner ;  
And question not my right to seek him  
there,

Let this suffice, thy master's golden seal,  
For my entitlement and just appeal."

"I recognise," the warder said, "the ring,  
And honour her who doth this token  
bring."

He then with willing hand applied the  
key,

The heavy bolts withdrew advertently,  
'Twas then, without demur, the gentle  
maid,

Forth enter'd in the dusky long facade,

Nor pauséd she, until where faintly shone  
A beam of light : in slanting rays upon  
The dungeon door, whose outward bars  
of steel

Were 'neath her gaze sufficient to reveal :  
The near approach and close proximity  
Unto her heart's desire ; she heaved a  
sigh—

The burthen of a maiden's sympathy,  
With fond expectancy her love to see ;  
She backward drew the bolts, and  
breathed his name,

Nor would her tongue, a sentence further  
frame,

Until, upon the oak a tap she gave,  
But faintly—to announce her will to save,  
The lonely captive from a close durance,  
A creature seemingly of circumstance ;

" 'Tis I, Rozeina, who thus far have come,  
To render thy detainment less irksome."  
The door she press'd and ere to open  
wide,

In glad familiar tones the knight replied,  
" A lady's voice I hear, whose words  
declare

A kind participation in my fare ;  
Good maiden enter, and, on me repose  
Thy confidence, that soon we may dispose  
And regulate our plans, I welcome thee,  
As one, who doth make sweet, ad-  
versity."

She stepp'd within, and ventured then to  
say,

" 'Tis with a thankful heart I do obey,  
Zerala's will, yet this I could not tell,  
But for the token of Sir Amozel—

His seal, unto my father which he gave,  
Apportion'd to myself, from harm to  
save."

"Glad is mine heart with joy," Zeralda  
said,

As fondly he the maiden's form survey'd,  
The ring, which in thine hand hath aided  
thee,

Hath furnish'd thee with full authority,  
According to thy choice, to range at will  
These spacious halls among, but not  
until

The games were o'er, could'st thou the  
seal obtain,

Which proved thine heart my liberty to  
gain,

For know, that he from whom the gift  
was ta'en,

Doth even now exhort thee to remain,  
But for a space in this sequestered cell :  
Wherein the history I have to tell,  
Accomplish'd is complete ; my prayer is  
this,

That thou wilt not consider me remiss,  
In thus acquainting thee ; and more  
would I

Of truth desire, which is thy lenity."

"Methinks thy speech would better be  
defer'd,"

The lady said, "for surely thou hast  
err'd,

In nought which needeth my reproach ;  
to thee

Unkind, and most ungrateful should I be  
To disregard the tokens of thy zeal,  
That with thy welcome now reveal

Thy faithfulness, in this I am content  
That thou art free from harm, and not  
absent  
From this, thine own ancestral heritage,  
Where friends have here assembled to  
engage  
In joyous unity." He thus replied,  
"Of confidence thy word hath testified,  
And this ordains that briefly I should  
speak,  
That we the sooner may our refuge seek  
In yonder banquet hall this gladsome  
eve,  
With one accord and high prerogative,  
To give a hearty welcome unto all,  
The high and low alike the great and  
small ;  
A secret plan have I to hasten hence,

For thee, Rozeina, be in no suspense :  
When thou again the entrance hall hath  
gain'd,  
But let thy mild forbearance be retain'd,  
And with a natural concinity,  
Maintain thy wonted equanimity.  
So shall a father's blessing on thee rest,  
Which is of all thy benefits the best,  
He whisper'd soft, " Till then, my love,—  
adieu,"  
And with a lightsome step, the maid  
withdrew.  
Zeralda then proceeded to apply,  
His skilfulness and ingenuity,  
So to evacuate without delay,  
The chamber wherein he was loathe to  
stay.

## CANTO V.

*Part III.*

A mellow note the castle bell had toll'd,  
A sound that echo'd like the ring of gold ;  
Within the hall, were seated in the shade,  
Gwenvolan and his daughter, light  
array'd ;

And, while they each alternately con-  
versed,

Before their view, that leisurely traversed,  
Along the corridor the nobles paced ;  
And portly dames and maids their foot-  
steps traced.

Unto Rozeina, thus her father said,  
“ Thy sadness with the light of day hath  
fled,

And this, my child, thy faith doth indicate

In my assertion, spoken to create,  
Thy maiden's trust in good Sir Amozel—  
Whose coming we await; and so 'tis well,  
For if thy will to this would not incline,  
And so, . . . devoid of concord to combine  
With him in fervency thy love,  
Then minded should I be to disapprove  
Of such dissension; but, as thy design  
Is otherwise, and equal unto mine,  
May peacefulness and joy thy portion be  
The evidence of unanimity.

And now Rozeina is our vigil done,  
For yonder comes the knight, who well  
hath won

The honours that a gentle bride bestows  
On him, that in his valour doth repose,

The virtues which inform a generous  
heart—

And to his mind, a nobleness impart ; ”  
Gwenvolan paused, while with a look  
benign

His visage glow'd, as doth the sunlight  
shine

Upon the crystal wave,” “ Glad day,”  
said he,

“ Is this my friend, wherein our unity  
Conduceth to our need such happiness,  
And saves us from a lonesome pensive-  
ness.

This is my daughter, who, with loving  
care,

Hath been disposed with constancy to  
share

Her father's sorrows and felicity,

With sympathizing loves simplicity."

"Of this I know," Sir Amozel replied,  
"For gentle fair Rozeina, far and wide  
Her graciousness abounds, the light of  
morn,

That with effulgent rays the earth adorn,  
Is semblant with her nature to compare,  
That yieldeth healing balm for grief and  
care,

And now, a welcome greeting I extend,  
To her and thee, that ye may com-  
prehend :

The joys unfeignéd that in truth transcend  
My warmest speech, empowered to por-  
tend,

A heartfelt sentiment; there is a name  
That yet remains unrecognized by fame,  
And e'en perchance to thee may be un-  
known :

The same which, I aver, that is mine  
own ;

Nor would I choose in future to conceal,  
This knowledge from thee which I now  
reveal,

When first my secret I declared to thee,  
'Twas with mine eyes, thy daughter's  
face to see,

That to thine house my steps were often  
bent ;

And she for whom I sought, if not absent,  
Withdrawn from my view herself would  
be ;

But no dismay would then dishearten me,  
'Twas not enough that in a rural glade,  
Her beauty to my ken, had been dis-  
play'd,

While she, unconscious of a stranger's  
glance,

With modest guise continued to advance.  
Delightful was the fair auspicious morn,  
When on the fragrant breeze the dew  
was borne,

That I had wandered forth at dawn of  
day,

Amid the flow'rs that in profusion lay  
About my path beneath the sylvan shade,  
And in seclusion, saw a sylph-like maid,  
In solitude alone ; then marvel'd I,  
And hasten'd to her side right willingly ;  
The blessing of those joys in words to  
frame,

May not be in my simple speech to name."

Then spake Gwenvolan, " Now, a  
moment stay,

For to my mind, thy converse doth  
convey

Enlightenment, and information new,  
That even doth acceptably subdue  
Strange doubts, that have but late per-  
plex'd my thought,  
Pertaining to the knight, of whom but  
nought  
To me was known, beyond his action  
bold :  
Whereof my daughter ventured to unfold,  
With delicate reserve, her words defined  
The symbol of her faith, and me inclined  
To hearken to the narrative she gave,  
Which was an eulogy more gay than  
grave ;  
Thus far by me her word shall be sus-  
tain'd,  
Thrice bless'd is he who hath her favour  
gain'd."

" My dearest father, whose propitious  
care,

Is for my weal the best that love may  
share,

Forbear thy compliment," the lady said,  
" Nor deem the conduct of a simple  
maid

Immaculate : and perfectly all wise,—  
If 'tis a daughter's duty to despise  
The homage of a courteous valiant  
knight,

Whose one integral law is just and right ;  
Now in yon sombre hues of this glad  
eve,

Night's sable mantle doth her shadows  
weave,

The sun's red gold hath faded in the  
west,

The birds have ceased their song, and  
gone to rest ;  
Serene and still, all silent and subdued,  
The undulating earth, no more endued  
With light of day, is hidden 'neath the  
veil,  
Where melting moistures in the gloom  
prevail ;  
Unnumber'd stars, the golden lamps of  
night,  
Now fill the spacious arch, all twinkling  
bright ;  
The virtues of the land involvéd sleep  
Beneath the shade, like treasures in the  
deep,  
And yet full long we linger hear to stay,  
When 'tis unwise our journey to delay ;  
So hasten now my father to employ,

Thine early effort, that we may enjoy  
A peaceful quick departure to our home.  
And thee, brave knight, I can not bid  
thee come,  
For many guests there be, who anxious  
wait  
To see thy face, that now is animate  
With genial light, and life." She spake  
no more,  
But waiting stood, while gentler than  
before—  
Zerala said, "'Tis thine own heart  
sweet maid,  
A casket rare, wherein are treasures  
laid  
Of love, that causeth thee of good to  
see,  
In mine own countenance so pleasantly ;

And now just for a space may we partake,  
Of sustenance that doth provision make,  
And strength renew'd for active enterprise,  
So shall our conduct be discreet and wise ;  
'Twas then they each proceeded through the hall,  
As though attentive to the bugle call,  
A silvern note that echo'd far and near,  
And nigh the banquet chamber sounded clear ;  
But 'twas not here the chieftain thought to guide  
Rozeina and her father by his side :  
“ Another plan have I,” he gently said,  
“ For our convenience, that ye may not dread

To this glad festival, the sacrifice  
Of fleeting time, which less than doth  
suffice,

Is now to join the throng ; so follow me,  
And soon shall we this night préparé  
be

For due investigation of the field,  
The happy homeward journey that may  
yield,

Of disappointments none, but peace and  
rest,

So shall that sweet reward be manifest."  
'Twas in the silence of the midnight  
hour,

When fair Rozeina sought her perfumed  
bower,

No anxious care, or pensive thought had  
she,

But dreams of love, and sweet tranquility.

\* \* \* \* \*

On Merville Tower had dawn'd the morning light,

A gladsome August morn, the shades of night

Were now dispersed, dissolvéd like a show'r,

The dewy moistures on each herb and flow'r,

Like jewels sparkled on their tender leaves,

In crystal beads begem'd the golden sheaves ;\*

Among the hills, and in the valleys green,

Beyond the mount, and in the dales  
unseen,

The shepherd's treasures grazed,—like  
silver shells,

Of varied note, was heard the tinkling  
bells.

Their soft metallic ring in tuneful sound,  
Did sweetly echo through the air around,  
As though with mystic wand and  
hammers light,

A dream of fairies struck the anvil  
bright;

Beneath the swaying branches of the fir,  
And sturdy oak, whose leaves the breezes  
stir,

There, hand in hand the maidens all  
unite,

In joyful acclamations of delight ;

While gaily ring the merry wedding  
    bells,  
That pealing oft of happiness foretells,  
Among the hills, their echo doth re-  
    sound,  
And through the woods, and in the dales  
    around.

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